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The New Statesman and Nation, April 14, 1934.

NEW STATESMAN
21st Birthday Supplement

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. VII. No. 164 (New Series) **SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 1934** [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] **SIXPENCE**

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE Bureau of the Disarmament Conference has met again this week, and adjourned again till the end of the month. Mr. Henderson and some of the delegates still talk with apparent hopefulness of the reduction of armaments. But few share their optimism; without a miracle, it seems as if an agreement for limitation is the utmost that can be expected. The French, it is true, have now expressed a willingness to concede something to the German claim, but only on terms. If Germany is to be allowed to increase her armaments, then France will require not merely a system of international supervision, but "guarantees of execution," which means firm pledges of support for herself against the German aggression that she fears. In fact, she is asking, as she has asked a hundred times before, for guarantees from Great Britain.

Rearmament or "Guarantees"

Whatever we may think of the French attitude (and it must be admitted that there is a great deal more ground for it now than there has been in past years), it is no good beating about the bush. France is not going to reduce her armaments in present circumstances, and the Germans are going to increase theirs. How far they have already gone was illustrated again by the figures produced in the House of Commons on Monday. The military, naval and air estimates of the Reich for 1934, compared with the expenditure of 1933, show an increase of nearly £18,000,000. The British Government, says Sir John Simon, are giving "very serious consideration" to this matter, and our Ambassador in Berlin has been instructed to make inquiries. The answers to those inquiries will deceive no one, and neither we nor France nor anybody else can stop the progress of German rearmament—except by the drastic method of a "preventive war," which is ruled out, or by the only other alternative, a drastic reduction of our own armaments. But that can no longer be achieved on the basis of a vague acceptance of the principle of collective security. It means more stringent commitments for this country, though their exact form and extent is as yet uncertain. Our decision is all important, and it cannot be indefinitely deferred. Either we go for "isolationism," which will mean a general *sauve qui peut*, more armaments, and no assurance of not being ourselves dragged into a

European conflict. Or we must be, in the words of the *Times*, "prepared loyally to back a disarmament convention with a promise to make the instrument effective."

Mr. Roosevelt and Congress

President Roosevelt is now facing a serious difficulty with Congress. The backbone of his financial policy is the Securities Act, which the financial interests are attacking by means of a most formidable lobby in Washington. During Mr. Roosevelt's absence on vacation Wall Street has succeeded in making an impression on Congress, and as a result some of the vital provisions are in peril. The President must stand by the Act; no part of his policy is clearer or more emphatic than his determination to protect the investing public from an unregulated Stock Exchange. The national Chamber of Commerce has issued a formal statement in which it is affirmed that the signs of definite recovery are multiplying throughout the country; and this, it may be noted, is not especially favourable to the President, for it is used as proof that American industry and business would get along much better if they could now be freed from the trammels of the New Deal. Mr. Roosevelt's immediate aim is to achieve an early adjournment of Congress for two main reasons. First, a shortened session would enforce concentration upon those outstanding measures which the Administration regards as essential; secondly, the longer Congress sits, the greater will be the danger of the inflationist West getting out of hand.

"Condition of India"

The Government of India had no alternative to banning the India League's report, *Condition of India* (Essential News, 2*s.* 6*d.*). For though the delegates of the India League can be represented as "biased" the lengthy document itself is crammed with damning facts, fully documented. The effective authority in India is not the British Cabinet, but the bureaucracy in India. Having decided to crush Indian Nationalism, the Government of India has prevented the realisation of the policy envisaged when Lord Irwin was Viceroy. It has made India a police state and the Ordinances which were to be purely temporary have now been embodied in legislation. It is impossible to dismiss as exaggerated the carefully investigated accounts of the police terror described in this book. The report is written with studious moderation and it is quite as much concerned with the shocking economic conditions of the Indian village as with the brutality of lathi charges, the unspeakable prison conditions, and the many abuses that naturally accompany unrestrained police rule. For the moment oppression appears to have won, but, as Bertrand Russell says in his preface to the report, "It cannot but produce a deep hatred which may have to bide its time, but will burst out sooner or later . . . The fine idealism of the Congress movement will be swept away by men who will have learnt from us to believe that the only appeal is to force; in some moment of difficulties elsewhere we shall find ourselves confronted by a movement we shall not be able to repress and we shall lose India with ignominy."

The Government and Housing

The discussion on housing in the Commons last Monday produced nothing new. Labour members made a vigorous attack on Sir Hilton Young, who replied as usual that everything was going swimmingly. He boasted again of the abolition of subsidies, though he admitted that there would have to be a "controlled subsidy" to deal with overcrowding; that was a matter which he would develop when the time was ripe. Meanwhile his second-in-command, Mr. Shakespeare, was dining with the National Federation of House Builders. We had hopes that Mr. Shakespeare might see a little farther than the end of his chief's nose; but to judge from his remarks at this dinner we were over-sanguine. He, too, boasted how the Government "had liberated the great forces of private enterprise." He counted on the private builders to build as cheaply and as well without a subsidy as local authorities had built with it. And he intimated that the activities of the local authorities under the new housing measure would not compete with ordinary building by private enterprise.

Building by Private Enterprise

It seems then that the role of the local authorities will be to deal with congested sites and areas too expensive for private enterprise to embark on. Private enterprise is to supply houses at reasonable rents—by which Mr. Shakespeare means inclusive rents of 10*s.* to 12*s.* a week. By its success in doing that, he says, will private enterprise be judged. But everybody knows, and Mr. Shakespeare knows, that there is an urgent need of houses at a much lower rent than 10*s.* or 12*s.* What is private enterprise going to do about that? Mr. Lord, the president of the National Federation of Housebuilders, was not very encouraging. In fact he appeared to be more interested in houses for sale than in houses for letting. "I think it is a mistaken policy," he said, "to ask for houses in unnecessarily large numbers to rent to tenants. It should be one of the aims of any housing policy to get people to buy their own houses and to encourage them to do so by really substantial assistance." This presumably means the assistance of the building societies; for subsidies, in Mr. Lord's view, would be a retrograde step. The building societies themselves, however, according to Sir Harold Bellman, are still ready to implement their promises to assist in the provision of houses for letting at low rentals to the poorer paid workers. Have Sir Hilton Young and the Government really got any consistent and considered housing policy?

Drought Legislation

There is nothing like Nature for showing up a Government. Hardly had the Government's Rural Water Supplies Act come into operation and the Ministry of Health's circular gone forth to local authorities explaining the terms on which they could lay claims to grants out of the quite inadequate £1,000,000 which had been set aside for the purpose, when the continuance of the drought forced it to introduce a hurried second measure. The new Bill is a purely *ad hoc* affair, dealing with rights of entering upon property, diminution of the supply of compensation water, and so forth, designed simply to cope with the present emergency—or more accurately with the emergency which will arise if the prevailing dry weather continues. It does nothing at all to meet the permanent needs of the rural community, which will remain at the mercy of small abnormalities in the rainfall. Although

the difficulties in dealing with this problem are real, they are certainly not insuperable; but a lazy Government which automatically shudders at the mention of public works prefers to throw the responsibility on to the rural authorities and to protest that the matter is a purely local one. Considering how regular the rainfall of this country normally is and how small are the margins of surplus or shortage, it is a national reproach that we should allow the same areas—for there are certain ones which are most affected when abnormality occurs—to go on suffering the periodic loss, discomfort and danger which are the penalties of inadequate water and drainage systems. Districts which are to-day short of water may quite conceivably within three or four months be enduring the visitations of flood. Here is the plainest case for a scheme of well-planned expenditure, which would be both constructive and productive.

An Inquest on the Marketing Schemes

The Commons' debate last Monday on the working of the Agricultural Marketing Schemes, showed how fast and how far opinion has moved during the past couple of years. No one any longer claimed that the Marketing Boards had solved, or would solve, the problems of British agriculture and of British food supply. Everyone, on the other hand, recognised that the Boards have come to stay, and it was almost common ground that the structure thus begun must be completed. How the marketing schemes are to be operated in future and in whose interests, have come to the fore as the questions that matter. The naive ambition of some of the farmers to use import regulation and a strong central body of their own as an instrument for exploiting the consumer has been disappointed. Where exploitation has been attempted the consumer has refused to consume, and the risk that prices might be forced up as a comfortable alternative to lower-cost production and expanded consumption has now become less serious. If, as we hope, this road is now blocked, the farmers may soon be forced to join with the distributors in getting down the cost of their produce so that the consumer can buy more of it.

The Consumer's Turn Next

Whether intentionally or not, the Milk Marketing Board has forced the taxpayer to give the farmer a new subsidy. This limited immediate advantage may cost agriculture more than it has bargained for in ultimate social control. Feeling is growing that the marketing structure, at present dominated by producers, must be harnessed to the service of the consumer. But who is to represent the consumer in everyday administration? The consumer committees which have so far been set up have proved dead-alive affairs. A consumers' council with a few active and fearless members, a small but first-rate staff, power to compel evidence, enough funds to get effective investigation done into the quality of products and into the methods of conveying them to the consumer, and with a live publicity officer to get out the results in the right form at the right time, would have a healthy influence. We have still to create such an instrument. It might cost a few tens of thousands annually, but such a roving and penetrating consumers' spotlight could save millions of pounds which are now frittered away in avoidable waste and dishonesty. When all other interests are organised (partly at public expense) the consumer has a right to this protection. Unfortunately in the past reliance has been placed on the often illusory benefits of statutory checks and committees, and too little on the power of investigation and publicity, when boldly and skilfully directed.

The Cunarder

It is good news for Clydeside and the country as a whole that work has begun again on the new Cunarder. In these lean days we cannot afford to sniff at even the most isolated signs of expansionism. The suggestion in America that the challenge of a new Cunarder should be countered by the scrapping of the *Leviathan* and her replacement by an up-to-date vessel is an indication of the overcrowding of the market which may result from an intensified scramble for national supremacy on the North Atlantic. It is doubtful whether there can ever be enough luxury passenger traffic on this route to support a full competitive service of German, French, British, Italian and American ships. Meanwhile we hope that, having resumed work on one new ship, the Cunard Company will take early steps to start upon a second; for experience has shown that one ship of this sort is a good deal less than half as useful as two operating together. One other point is important. If so much public money is to be risked on this bid for ocean prestige, some sort of guarantee should be extracted from the company that it will be used to make the vessel in every detail—and especially in the matter of interior design—a worthy example of British craftsmanship. There must be none of the sham-antique so beloved of British furnishing contractors.

Waterloo Bridge

The stalwart defenders of Rennie's masterpiece are preparing to die under the last arch, but there is no doubt now that Waterloo Bridge must go, and as quickly as possible. This controversy has already lasted ten years too long and must not be allowed any longer to impede the progress of transpontine and river traffic. People who want to retain the existing structure on the ground that it matches the surrounding buildings beside it, overlook the fact that the character of the river-front is changing rapidly and will do so still faster when the long-delayed development on the south side begins, and that if anything it is Rennie's masterpiece, not the new buildings, which will soon look out of place. But Waterloo Bridge is neither to be attacked nor defended as a pure matter of aesthetics; in the end it is a question of utility. From the point of view of the waterman the existing bridge is a menace and should be replaced at the earliest moment by one more amenable to river traffic, if not by a suspension bridge, as Lord Ritchie has urged in the *Times*, then by a bridge with fewer arches. It will be a scandal if purely monumental considerations, or dislike of a Labour L.C.C. disguised as such, are allowed to hold up this matter once more. Mr. Morrison has explained that the decision to construct a new Waterloo Bridge does not imply that the Charing Cross scheme is ruled out. A settlement of the whole matter is imperative, not only because of the needs of traffic, but also because of the bearing it has on rebuilding schemes in South London.

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CHAOS IN THE AIR?

QUITE suddenly, so far as normal public awareness of these things is concerned, this country is threatened with an immense extension of internal flying services. A fortnight or so ago two new internal air lines were opened, between London and Plymouth and between London and Manchester—the latter the first section of a service to be extended on May 1st to Scotland. Last Friday the Prime Minister and Lord Londonderry attended the opening ceremony of the Liverpool–Belfast–Glasgow–Birmingham line. The railway Big Four, in conjunction with Imperial Airways, have formed a company known as Railway Air Services, Ltd., to run air services between strategic traffic centres in the kingdom and outside it. It is estimated that altogether as many as fifteen separate undertakings will be operating on internal air routes in Great Britain this summer. If present intentions are fulfilled, these routes will cover between 4,000 and 5,000 miles, or getting on for a quarter of the total railway mileage of this country. When we consider what was until recently thought and said about the unsuitability of this little cloud-covered island for internal air development, these projected extensions are rather astonishing.

But when we consider what they seem likely to mean in terms of overlapping, price-cutting rivalry and lost investments they cease to be merely astonishing and become disturbing. How many of these fifteen lion-hearted pioneers are destined to survive the first season's competition? How many would emerge sound in wing and bank-balance from a quite possible year of bad weather and bad trade? Last season, on its Birmingham–Cardiff–Torquay air service the Great Western Railway lost more than £6,000. Undeterred by such experience, company after company, with more air than commercial sense, is about to leap into the skies. Railway Air Services, Ltd., apparently do not themselves intend to do very much business this summer—only three routes are said to be proposed—and what they do will be done chiefly, one gathers, to prevent others from doing as well as in uncompetitive circumstances they might. This process of losing in order to stop someone else winning promises to provide some spectacular results. Take Scotland, for example. According to the *Times*, there are two companies definitely committed to a Scottish service, a third is contemplating it, "*and the railways may be forced in self-defence to add a fourth.*" The italics are ours, but the confusion will be everyone's. This looks like affording an example of private enterprise at its most uneconomic.

It looks, in fact, remarkably like the sort of thing that happened in the development of road transport immediately after the war. We know now what that uncontrolled riot of price-cutting meant in terms of capital loss, bad conditions of employment and public nuisance. What guarantee have investors or the travelling public that similar conditions will not develop in this country in the air? Moreover, the fear of price-cutting at the expense of the margin of safety might deter the public from patronising enterprises that were in themselves above suspicion—a reflection that should at least give pause to those who, while all in favour of unlimited commercial enterprise, are equally all in favour of making the nation beautifully air-minded. There is a further consideration. The railways cannot be blamed for taking the initiative in a direction for which they expressly obtained Parliamentary powers, in order to prevent their having to stand by with tied hands and watch a repetition in the air of the encroachment on their trade which they suffered from road transport. But the public will want some sort of guarantee that railway flying services shall be used legitimately, and not to repeat on a smaller scale the scandalous history of the canals. These Scottish routes, for instance. We have no doubt of the full integrity of the intentions of Railway Air Services, Ltd., in any London to Scotland service it may contemplate. But one cannot rule out of one's calculations the possibility that to some future company or companies, having successfully overcome lesser competition and established something like a monopoly, the temptation might become irresistible to use the position thus consolidated to protect the interests of the "Royal Scots" and "Flying Scotsmen" of the future.

There has been a rumour to the effect that some of the new companies about to operate, shocked at their own temerity, are considering a form of co-operation; but we have been unable to find any confirmation of it. The suggestion is contrary to nature; commercial nature in the raw is seldom anything but wild. The *Times*, as one would expect, is blandly benevolent about the whole prospect: "Their [the competing companies'] activities will represent legitimate business moves," it characteristically observes in a leader; "all additional stimulus in this direction will be welcome." Others, less securely convinced of the blessings of unrestricted private enterprise, will not be so complacent. The example of the roads is not reassuring. The record of fifteen years of unfettered road transport development forms one of the strongest arguments in economic history for some kind of public control.

Is the same thing about to happen in the air? There is a case—there is always a case if one chooses to make it—for allowing private initiative to do the pioneering work, to stand the early losses and clear the field of failure and experiment before authority steps in to create order and stability. Before there can be co-ordination—so the argument runs—there must be something to co-ordinate. Even if this argument were sound, which it is not, because the private speculator is speculating with other people's money, there is a specially strong reason for early control in the case of a form of public transport in which safety and efficiency are all-important factors. What will more probably happen, we predict, is that after several years of overlapping, price-cutting, private loss and public inconvenience, authority will have to step in with an Act of Parliament to wring some sort of order out of the chaos. Even then, no doubt, there will be plenty of people who will write to the newspapers to protest against this unwarranted piece of interference and to point to the pleasures of *laisser faire* and the benefits of unrestricted private enterprise.

Is it too much to hope that the Government, with an impressive and growing list of publicly controlled national enterprises to encourage it, will take some action at least to curtail the worst excesses of unco-ordinated development? Well, yes, of course, it is. Authority is in such a scramble just now to promote air development at any price that it will never consider anything that could be regarded superficially as discouraging to the nation's

air-mindedness. The Prince of Wales has been enlisted in the campaign to promote expansion, and recently exhorted the mayors of England to hurry up and provide their municipalities with aerodromes. The ideal is sound enough and would be still more admirable if it were not for the suspicion aroused by some of the names most prominently associated with it—names attached elsewhere to manifestos demanding a vast expansion of aerial armaments. But before these worthy towns and cities rush to do their duty, let them be sure that the plot of land they covet for their airport is in all respects the right one for the purpose.

How can they be sure of this? We hope that the Aerodromes Advisory Board, recently established to advise the Air Ministry on matters relating to the groundwork of civil aviation, will submit to the Ministry plans for a more or less complete survey of internal air routes. Such a survey would not come a second too soon. Indeed, in view of the developments now in hand, it would come several months, at least, too late. When the whole country has been surveyed with an eye to the most suitable and economic air routes, their inter-connecting points and terminals, local authorities will be in a position to choose with more confidence the site for their municipal airports. When the survey has been completed the basis will exist for devising a plan of controlled and co-ordinated air services with provision for future development. Meanwhile we must presumably rest content with the spectacle of rival companies launching, on the savings of private investors, unwanted air services to compete with existing and doubtfully remunerative ones, in the interests of what is quaintly called "self-defence."

THE STAVISKY TRAGI-COMEDY

I WAS in the press gallery of the Chamber during that memorable sitting of January 11th, when the Stavisky affair first came up for public discussion. It was three days after Stavisky had committed suicide, or had been "suicided," as most people said—and believed. To put it mildly, the atmosphere in the Chamber was poisonous. When M. Herriot mounted the tribune, and began to talk about "Stavinsky," there was a general chuckle, and I heard someone behind me say: "Stavinsky! Tiens, tiens! I suppose he's trying to suggest he's never even seen the man!" Thanks to the *Action Française* and a good number of other papers, there was hardly a politician in France at the time who was above suspicion. Of course, they *would* say they had never heard of Stavisky. But where had all Stavisky's money gone? Had he not walked off with 400 or 500 or 600 million francs; and when he died did he not leave his wife with 35,000 francs in the world? And had not Mme. Stavisky spoken to the magistrate of the black ingratitude of her husband's friends—all those grand people who had dined and wined with him, and who now denied ever having seen him? "Tous pourris!" the *Action Française* would write. "Tous dans le même sac!" the *Humanité* would respond. And the young patriots of the *Action Française*, including some nondescript Poles and Algerians hired at ten francs a night, would bawl in the streets: "A bas les voleurs!" Later, at the committee of inquiry into the January and February riots, a deputy asked a policeman who was giving evidence whether, in his opinion, "les voleurs" meant all the deputies or only a few of them. With professional dignity the policeman replied that he was not qualified to express an opinion on the subject. The committee members thought him a saucy fellow.

This is not written in defence of parliamentary government; but now that the committee of inquiry into the Stavisky affair has worked for six weeks, it has become clear that Parliament has come comparatively well out of it. Half a dozen, at most a dozen, members of parliament out of a total of nearly 900 have had a finger in the Stavisky pie. And when one remembers the tremendous political agitation which shook the Third Republic to its very foundations, one cannot help feeling that Parliament was made the scapegoat in this extraordinary scandal. This agitation would not have been as successful as it was had it not been for the general economic discontent; in times of prosperity the Stavisky affair would have been forgotten much sooner—though, no doubt, its melodramatic complications would have kept the public amused for some time, for the stories about the Stavisky gangsters certainly make marvellous copy. But at a time when the "petit fonctionnaire" has his income of £100 reduced by 5 per cent. in the name of financial salvation, a 400 million racket is a serious affair; and hence the success of the political agitation around the dead body of "le bel Alexandre."

But Parliament had comparatively little to do with it, except that the *République des Camarades*, with its easy-going manners, its personal favours, its universal "tutoyage," its "cher ami" and "mon vieux" had undoubtedly facilitated the work of the racketeers.

In the *République des Camarades* Stavisky had an invaluable friend in Albert Dubarry, the editor of the *Volonté*, a paper with few readers but with many sources of income. Dubarry was round and pink, and had a genius for "tutoyage," handshakes and pats on the back. He always smiled through his white whiskers, and was everybody's "cher ami." In a letter recently published in the press, M. Tardieu recommended "mon ami Dubarry" to the Governor-General of Morocco. He was the "cher ami" of Dalimier, who signed those unfortunate letters about the Bayonne bonds; he was, likewise, the "cher ami" of Chiappe—in fact, "un ami de jeunesse," and it was he who asked the Prefect to receive Stavisky; and being everybody's "cher ami" he received subsidies for his unreadable paper from the secret funds of the Ministry of the Interior and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, even after Stavisky (so at least Dubarry declared before the examining magistrate the other day) had taken control of the *Volonté*.

Whether it was by virtue of his camaraderie, or by some other virtue, M. Albert Dubarry certainly obtained everything he wanted for his "cher ami" Stavisky. He secured a job for Stavisky's lawyer at the Ministry of Finance; he put Stavisky in touch with Chiappe; with the approval of the Minister of the Interior, he got the Sûreté Générale to restore Stavisky's gambling licence; and when an Inspector of the Sûreté was going to arrest an illegal bookie at the races one day, Dubarry pounced on him and said: "Don't you dare do that; or I'll report you to André." "André"—so Inspector Colombani said in telling the story to the committee of inquiry—"André, c'était Monsieur Tardieu."

* * *

Stavisky was arrested in 1926 on charges of theft and fraud. Before his case came up for trial he was "provisionally released" in 1927. Subsequently, the hearing of his case was adjourned by the Parquet no fewer than nineteen times; and till the moment of his death Stavisky remained "en liberté provisoire." There are 3,000 people in Paris "en liberté provisoire"; but nineteen postponements was a record. During his six years' freedom he not only engineered all sorts of swindles, but almost came to be accepted as a member of the smart set at Deauville and elsewhere; and his greatest ambition was to build up political connections with the aid of Dubarry and a few unscrupulous or simple deputies; but, on the whole, Stavisky's contacts with the world of politics were only very fragmentary. It is therefore hardly surprising that the committee members should have reacted unfavourably to Inspector Colombani's reply to their question whether he had known Stavisky. "Mais oui, comme tout le monde,"

that cheeky fellow replied. The reactions of the committee are recorded in the shorthand report by the phrase "Mouvements divers," which might be translated by "Like hell we did," or other words to the same effect.

No; the two services which were really guilty of complaisance or corruption, or both, were the Sûreté Générale and the Parquet—that part of the judiciary which brings the legal actions before the Courts, and which agreed nineteen times, for reasons which still remain obscure, to postpone the hearing of Stavisky's 1926 case. And so his "liberté provisoire" continued for six years. In a report drawn up by M. Lescouvé, the First Judge of the Court of Cassation, this extraordinary slackness of the Parquet is largely attributed to M. Pressard, the recently dismissed Public Prosecutor, who was at the head of the Parquet. And as M. Pressard is M. Chautemps's brother-in-law, the public naturally wondered whether that did not account for M. Chautemps's opposition to the formation of a committee of inquiry. In France two and two always make four.

As for the Sûreté Générale, an inspector giving evidence before the committee of inquiry said that Stavisky had been "sacred and untouchable"; never had he known anybody enjoy so many favours from the Sûreté as Stavisky did. But the most scandalous thing of all was that Stavisky should himself have been an informer in the service of the Sûreté—a function which undoubtedly gave him the benefit of the greatest "legal facilities." It is true that, as his "employer," Inspector Bayard said, before the committee of inquiry, "on ne trouve pas des indicateurs dans les couvents," but, all the same, the public thought that there was something definitely abnormal in this systematic co-operation and camaraderie between State detectives and people whom they knew to be jail-birds. There have since been many examples of this camaraderie. It was, for instance, by a friendly—and costly—arrangement between a Sûreté inspector and two alleged gangsters that the famous Stavisky counterfoils were recovered. Not that they were of much use; for the most sensational among them turned out to be fakes. The deal was probably concluded at the "Frolic's Club," a gambling den and a social centre for gangsters and police spies. Stavisky used to be one of its habitués. A wonderful place, that "Frolic's Club." I often used to pass it; for it is, I regret to say, in the same building as a number of respectable British newspaper offices; and one day, as I was passing, I saw an unpleasant looking corpse being carried out of it. The papers afterwards said that a white-slave trafficker had shot a dope trafficker—or it may have been the other way round.

And if the mystery of the Prince murder has not yet been solved, the public cannot help suspecting that the Sûreté may have reasons of their own for not wanting to solve it. My concierge, for instance, is perfectly convinced that the murder was arranged at the "Frolic's Club," and most of the papers say so, too. Thus the Stavisky affair is a vast police scandal, a big legal scandal, a warning to deputies guilty of excessive camaraderie, and only a minor political scandal. At first the Chamber was blamed for everything; but the committee of inquiry has since helped to disclose the real facts.

ALEXANDER WERTH

PARIS, *April 9th.*

A LONDON DIARY

CRITIC'S holiday chiefly consisted in having a cold in the island of Majorca. The island is composed of grey mountains with neat horizontal stripes of grey going round them (these are stone walls) and grey-green spots, which are olive trees, in between the stripes. The trees live up to their reputation for age, having worn their trunks into shreds; sometimes they have to lie down for a rest. Here and there a contrasting shade of orange is introduced into the rock, and the earth, if any, is orange too. There was also a young man who had orange hair in the hotel; his occupation was to climb to the top of an extremely high mountain every day and build a wireless station on it. In the valleys there were bright green trees covered with Hesperidean fruit. There was no dragon to guard them, unless he lived at the bottom of a well like Truth; anyway, our particular well had buckets tied all round the wheel to keep the monster down. Critic lay in his bedroom with the window shut because of the wind and the door shut because the English visitors would tune in the B.B.C. all day long, and watched the stream swelling every day and carrying more and more windfall oranges into the sea, which immediately vomited them up in shining heaps. The tallest mountains were really combed with snow. In spite of the oranges and the mountains, Critic feels that Majorca is not the right island to be ill in. Next time he wants to be ill, he is going to the Andaman Islands, where there are those nice criminals and savages, or Manhattan Island, where you simply push a button and the whale does the rest, or the Isle of Dogs.

* * *

While "A.P.H." in *Punch* is a damp squib, A. P. Herbert in *Holy Deadlock* (Methuen, 7*s.* 6*d.*) is a glorious rocket. The subject—the monstrous absurdity of English divorce laws—is perfectly suited to Mr. Herbert's talents. He simply describes with full legal detail the sufferings of two people who want a divorce. The husband must "behave like a gentleman" i.e., commit adultery ("intimacy" is considered a nicer word), or pretend to commit it, so that his wife may be free to marry another gentleman who is on the staff of the B.B.C., and who will lose his position if involved in the case. "This is going to be a difficult case," said Mr. Boom (one of Mr. Herbert's best legal characters). "Three parties with principles and one with a job at the B.B.C." Principles ruin the chances of divorce. When everyone tells lies the court is satisfied; as soon as anyone tells the truth, it's all up. "You must get it into your head," says Mr. Boom, "that you are putting your name down for an obstacle race; and the court cheats all the time." The story is told with the most delicious wit: one laughs from the first page till the last—and then one stops laughing. For though there is not a savage word in the book its effect as a whole is to fill one with rage—a rage which one knows that Mr. Herbert has felt and restrained—that people who want to dissolve their marriage compact should be dragged through all this mud, forced to waste endless time and money and legally compelled to commit adultery against their wishes. The only caveat is that in practice to-day the extreme obstacles in this case, culminating with the incredibly amusing detective work of the King's Proctor, are in fact rare. This is an extreme case. But it remains true, as Mr. Boom puts it, that:

> The law regards physical fidelity as the vital element in the marriage bond. Thus, without an act of adultery on one side or the other it is impossible to obtain a divorce. And a single act of infidelity is sufficient cause for the dissolution of a long and happy marriage, though the act may have begun and ended in five minutes—a sudden unpremeditated act, the first of a passing craziness, jealousy, temper or desire. So dearly does the law regard the purity of the marriage vow. It is, as we lawyers say, of the essence of the contract. One would think, then, that where *both* parties have violated the fundamental clause of the contract, there was twice the reason for dissolving the partnership. Not a bit of it. We say that in that case there is no good ground for divorce at all—except in special cases at the discretion of the Court. Normally, the guilty couple must remain united in law, though the only bond between them in fact is that each is living in sin with somebody else. They are, as somebody said, "joined together in unholy matrimony." Or shorter still, "married alive"; "Are you raving," said Dr. Adams, "or am I?"

* * *

These ludicrous provisions remain, largely because of ecclesiastical influence. Our law in relation to matters of sex is still modelled on the sexual habits of a nomadic eastern tribe which was peripatetic in the torrid zone over 2,000 years ago and desired passionately to breed, in order to protect itself from its enemies. Because divorce is still regarded as a punishment for sin, it cannot be granted if both parties want it, since that would punish neither of them. And Parliament does not alter the law because no party dare offend the religious

vote. No one has ever answered the argument in Lord Birkenhead's great speech in the House of Lords when he accused the Lord Bishops of that day of encouraging adultery. To-day the Church of England is becoming more enlightened; but the Catholic vote is still a sufficient deterrent. I admit that it is possible that the divorce law would not be sensibly mended even apart from the religious influence. Those who have followed the series of articles in the *Political Quarterly* on Law Reform will know that monstrous delays and expenses vitiate our whole civil procedure. In the new issue of the *Political Quarterly*, Mr. W. H. Thompson, one of the rare solicitors who do not mind speaking openly about the legal profession, gives a devastating account of the risks of taking, for example, an action for libel. I knew the law was pretty bad, but I had not realised before just how chancy a business justice is.

* * *

You will perhaps remember that on February 3rd last the *Daily Mail* had a wonderful story about the "Red Menace in the Public Schools. Moscow attempts to corrupt Boys." The occasion for this scene was the decision by Mr. Esmond Romilly, of Wellington, to publish an inter-school paper devoted to counteracting the very active Fascist propaganda that does go on in public schools. The *Daily Mail* said "there was a strong suspicion that the money for it comes from Bolshevist funds." The headmaster of Wellington, a sensible man, took quite a different view, and saw no harm in the paper. Mr. Romilly, however, left Wellington, and the first issue of his paper *Out of Bounds* has now appeared. It is nicely got up, contains notes on various public schools, a long satirical play, entitled "Derek, or Tittle by Tattle," information about the practically compulsory nature of the O.T.C. at most public schools and an argument of the case for and against Fascism by Michael Wallace, leader of the Oundle School Fascist Youth Group, and Mr. Romilly himself.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Readers are invited to send us cuttings suitable for inclusion in this column. Address: 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

. . . Later on, in criticising his opponents, Bailie Maclennan said: *It is not liberty the working classes want, but licence. Then there were the P.S.A. Socialists such as Mr. Arthur Henderson and Mr. George Lansbury, who could not go upstairs without breaking his leg.* Looking around as one with a long experience of politics he could see no alternative (for the National Government was not going to last for ever) save the onward march of Toryism, for *Toryism was the only goal that led to prosperity.* . . . Mrs. Fullarton occupied the chair and welcomed Bailie Maclennan. There was a large attendance and the Town Hall was filled to capacity, *but practically all those present belonged to the fair sex—a notable tribute to the political sagacity of Mr. Baldwin in giving the flappers the vote.*—From a report of a speech by Bailie Maclennan at Glasgow.

There remains a mistaken idea that Rugby was a "gentleman's game." With only twenty-two playing members, he appealed for more players in order to run a second fifteen next season. With the problems of Fascism and Communism that were before us to-day, the spirit of Rugby football should be the spirit of every true Englishman.—*Nottingham Journal.*

However delightful the powder tastes, it is definite that a real man would prefer to kiss a lovely soft naked cheek.—Advert. in *Evening Standard.*

Cremation Society.—Life membership £5 5s. includes cremation at death. Prospectus free from Secretary.—Advt. in *Times.*

Did She? By Elinor Glyn. ". . . The question of the book's title arises out of the situation in which their happy romance, bubbling to the pinnacle of the spirit through the mire of false appearances—like the lotus emerging from the slime—reveals the inward and final meaning of the most gripping and readable romance that Elinor Glyn has written."—From the publishers' Spring List.

INDIA

PROBABLY a great many freedom-loving and progressive-minded Englishmen feel that in the midst of a world whose legal and moral foundations have been undermined, the quiet, steady, determined progress, in spite of the fierce opposition of the Die-hards, towards a greater measure of political freedom for India is one of the redeeming features both of the world situation generally and of the National Government's record in particular.

Lord Sankey, it seems, has been as good as his word; he has held the National Government to its early promises given in the Round Table Conferences. Sir Samuel Hoare, though he may have inserted more safeguards than the Labour Government was contemplating, has honestly held to the main lines charted out by his predecessors. So far as India is concerned, it would seem that the liberal, freedom-loving traditions of this country still hold good. All this forms an attractive view; and the task of calling it in question is a thankless one. Nevertheless, I suggest that this view, however sincerely held, is dangerously short-sighted and even false.

Consider Sir John Perronet Thompson's pamphlet expounding and defending the White Paper. He says many wise and penetrating things in his discussion of "safeguards" and of some of the common Die-hard criticisms. He admits, for instance, the danger inherent in any scheme that is over-buttressed with safeguards. "The value of responsibility," he writes, "is the root-issue of the whole controversy. The weakness of safeguards lies in the temptation to challenge them. Indeed, it is in a sense true to say that the safeguards themselves are a source of danger in so far as they tend to weaken the sense of responsibility." Defending the transfer of law and order to Indian Ministers, he shows how much easier it will be for a responsible Indian Minister to take strong measures against those who may challenge his authority than for an irresponsible Britisher. "If an Englishman in India takes a strong line, not only India but England and America too may ring with denunciation. If an Indian were to do the same, he would have his own communal press behind him, and the Western world would be uninterested and unmoved."

Similarly, Sir John Thompson effectively defends the extension of the franchise to a largely illiterate population. But when he turns from Die-hard criticism to Indian criticism he is disappointing. Moderate Indian criticism he examines briefly, and finds unimportant. Congress criticism, representing a much greater volume of opinion, he wholly ignores.

It is most unfortunate that even liberal-minded ex-officials, perhaps because they have suffered from exasperating and irritating opposition and misrepresentation from Congressmen in India, are disposed to dismiss the Congress as mere irreconcilable extremism. Doubtless this attitude is intensified by the perplexing nature of Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi is, of course, totally unlike most politicians. His standard of values is not theirs. While they are thinking in terms of constitutional rights, he is thinking in terms of peasant poverty. During the later stages of the second Round Table Conference an official of the India Office remarked: "We have always felt that the Indian politicians were out of touch with the peasants; and we believe that we give more thought to their interests that those politicians. Mr. Gandhi we recognise is different."

It may be objected that even if Mr. Gandhi cares so much for the peasants he, after all, is not the Congress. That is true; but the popular leaders of the Congress in the various provinces—Vallabhbhai Patel and others in Gujerat, Jawaharlal Nehru in the United Provinces, Rajendra Prasad in Bihar, Rajagopalacharia in Madras and others—are all proved friends of the poor, some of them convinced Socialists. Certainly there are other elements in the Congress; but it is to that body almost alone in India to-day that the peasants and workers can look with any hope.

What, then, are the Congress criticisms of the White Paper?

In one sense the answer is not easy, for the Congress is not in the least interested in the White Paper. They see that it does not give India the substance of self-government, that it does not give the opportunity of getting on with the job of combating poverty; so they are content to register their protest, in or out of jail, and to work for the masses as well as they may in spite of the hampering restrictions of the authorities as, for instance, by destroying such rotten social evils as untouchability.

Nevertheless, the main lines of their criticism are clear: they are two. First, that the White Paper scheme is hopelessly undemocratic. Secondly, that the transfer of financial responsibility is a sham, and that in fact this scheme would put a greater burden of taxation than ever upon the over-burdened Indian peasants.

The assignment of a third of the seats in the National Assembly to the Princes, and additional seats to other privileged groups, together with the communal award, which puts a premium on bigotry, makes the development of a strong democratic government in India almost impossible. The Conservative supporters of the National Government may be comforted by the knowledge that the new constitution will make for stability in India. No doubt it will: stability of power for the Princes, of wealth for landlords, money-lenders, merchants, employers and lawyers on the one hand; and on the other, stability of social subjection for women, and of abject poverty, religious bigotry, ignorance and social degradation for the dumb millions of the villages and towns.

As to finance, Mr. Gandhi has often declared that real *swaraj* means control of the purse—and, unless English history teaching has undergone a revolution in recent years, every schoolboy in this country may be expected to agree with him. The White Paper gives India financial autonomy with one hand and takes it away with the other. The Minister of Finance in the Central Government is to be responsible to the Assembly; but he will be responsible for only 20 per cent. of the budget. The remaining 80 per cent.—army, civil services and other reserved departments—will be entirely outside his control. No wonder Mr. Gandhi declared categorically in the second Round Table Conference that nothing would ever induce him to accept responsibility under such conditions. Will any self-respecting Indian take office and be responsible for presenting a budget when he knows that he cannot touch the army budget (about 80 per cent. higher to-day than it was in 1914), or the cost of the civil service? Why should he have no voice in deciding how many highly paid officials his country needs, or can afford? To use Mr. Gandhi's metaphor, in a country where the quality of the milk is miserably poor, we insist on skimming off all the cream. The new Constitution, too, seems likely to cost India at least £5 millions a year more than the present. There remains one more fundamental criticism. Is it really to be supposed that a constitution devised in England will fit India? Is it racial arrogance, or is it just lack of imagination, that leads us to assume that we understand India's needs better than her own sons and daughters can do? But, it will be protested, have we not been careful to obtain Indian advice, suggestions and criticisms all the way through? Yes, we have; and therein lies half the tragedy of our relations with the Indian people. Whenever we have to deal with the people of India, we always seem to go the wrong way about it. Instead of going boldly to their acknowledged leaders, and saying, "We want to come to an understanding with you," we prefer to deal with all kinds of people who for one reason or other—honourable reasons in many cases, less honourable in others—are eager to keep on good terms with us. And so we gather together a formidable array of the most diverse folk, and call it a Round Table Conference, and pretend that we are dealing with the leaders of India. But they are responsible to no one, so they are inevitably all at sixes and sevens; they are not the chosen leaders of the country, and the heart of India is not touched.

The real greatness of Lord Irwin lies in this, that he was able to touch the heart of India, and that he thereby came to see that Gandhi was the man he must come to terms with if friendship with India were to be established. One of the wisest Indians who came to the Round Table Conference, not a professional politician, used to say: "If only you people would deal with the one man who can deliver the goods! The rest of us don't matter at all." We still reject his advice; we still think Congress is "the enemy." We still imprison the men and women who are strong enough to stand up against us, and who are, therefore, much the most likely to be strong enough to tackle those vast problems of Indian welfare which "God's Englishmen," assisted by amenable Indians, can never tackle. The British House of Commons and the official White Paper, whatever good will they may represent, are in fact just obstacles in the path. A constituent assembly in India is the real need.

HORACE G. ALEXANDER

ALL'S WELL

As I mentioned of late, I am anxious to seek,
For the good, not the ill, in the news of the week,
And discard my too frequently cynical attitude,
As occasions arise, for the posture of gratitude;
And to-day, in despite of some local distress,
All's well with the world, as it seems from the press.

In the first place, the experts at Rome have decided
That the food by the coming world harvests provided
Will be somewhat reduced, which we've learned to regard
As an excellent sign, since we find it so hard
(Although thousands may starve) to make adequate use,
In a civilised world, of the grain we produce.

Then our neighbours, the Nazis, it seems have been brought
To tolerate freedom of speech and of thought.
At least they've announced that each German may choose,
Unfettered, his own theological views,
And obey them as conscience and reason dictate—
Within limits laid down by the Aryan State.
Nay, they've even announced, of docility tired,
That the press need not always be wholly inspired,
But may criticise gently; at least, may be free
To examine their projects, discuss—and agree.

And lastly, our own happy country has passed
Through an Easter less deadly to life than the last.
True the road took its toll; and yet who would complain
Of some few score pedestrians mangled or slain,
Since statistics disclose, when expertly dissected,
That the slaughter was very much less than expected.

With such items of news, do you wonder my attitude
Is changed, for the moment, to passionate gratitude?

MACFLECKNOE

Correspondence

LIBRARY OF BURNED BOOKS

SIR,—A German Library of the Burned Books will be opened at 65 Boulevard Arago, Paris, on May 10th next. This, it will be recalled, is the anniversary of the date of the burning of books in Germany by order of the National Socialist Party. Among the books which were burned or suppressed in Germany were such classics as the entire works of Heinrich Heine, and various writings by Lessing, Voltaire, Einstein and Freud. Further, the novels of such modern authors as Heinrich Mann, E. M. Remarque, Lion Feuchtwanger, and Jacob Wassermann, and the historical works of Emil Ludwig and Mehring were also destroyed.

The forbidden works also include a large number of scientific, economic and sociological books of international importance. All of these, however, have been collected for purposes of study and reference in the Library which will be officially inaugurated on May 10th in Paris, in order that they should be available to

students, research workers, and those to whom their preservation appears to be of the utmost importance.

In addition, the Library contains all those works which are indispensable to the study and analysis of Hitlerism, from H. S. Chamberlain to Alfred Rosenberg.

The work of maintaining and extending the Library and of making it available to the public is beyond the unaided powers of the eminent German men of letters and sociologists to whom its inception is due. We have, therefore, undertaken the task of forming in this country, as has already been done in France, a Society of the Friends of the Library of the Burned Books in the belief that there are many who will agree with our view that such an undertaking is of historical and sociological importance. We invite all those interested to co-operate with us in giving the Library financial and other support.

The Hon. Sec. of the British Committee, Mrs. J. B. S. Haldane, 16 Park Village East, N.W.1, will be glad to supply further particulars of the Library's work. Contributions towards it will be gratefully received by the Hon. Treas., Prof. G. E. G. Catlin, 19 Glebe Place, S.W.3.

H. G. WELLS
MARGOT OXFORD
LOUIS GOLDING
WICKHAM STEED
J. B. S. HALDANE
HUBERTUS PRINZ ZU LÖWENSTEIN
CHARLOTTE HALDANE (Hon. Sec.)

MANAGING ON THE DOLE

SIR,—One is filled with admiration for the brave woman who manages to maintain a husband and three of a family on 29*s*. 3*d*. per week, and still more, for the uncomplaining assertion that "it can be done." The striking figure in her budget is the sum of 10*s*. per week for rent. I assume that this includes rates. The figure is fully 33 per cent. of the weekly income. The average burghal rates, inclusive of water, in England exceed 12*s*. 6*d*. per pound. We may therefore assume that 6*s*. 3*d*. per week is paid for rates by this poor occupier.

A more striking illustration of the necessity for removing rates from rent and placing the rating system of the kingdom on a basis of wages and salaries and income generally could scarcely be presented. Under such a revised system the burden of rent would be reduced by more than a half in many cases, to the poorer classes of the community. Even though the "dole" were called on to pay its share of rates the contribution in this instance would be less than a shilling, in place of 6*s*. 3*d*., and thereby 5*s*. 3*d*. would be set free for household necessaries, weekly.

I believe that a tax of 1*s*. per pound on all incomes from every source whatever, with, probably 1*s*. 3*d*. per pound upon incomes derived from investments, would pay the whole of local expenditure generally. HENRY S. KEITH

Avonholm, Hamilton.

SIR,—The discussion on "Managing on the Dole" no doubt has stirred a good many of your readers, and as Commander King-Hall puts it, "Apart from the ethics of the matter, its economics are so deplorable." But may I be allowed to direct the notice of your readers to another section of those who may be unfortunate enough to be unemployed, and whose fate is even more appalling still? That is those agricultural workers (but apart from these there are other grades, I believe), who are not included in the State Insurance Scheme. The plight of many of these is dreadful, as they have very seldom been able to make anything like adequate provision when employed for such a contingency as being out of a job, for wages usually range between 28*s*. and 32*s*. a week, depending upon the county.

I came across a family the other week, which is no exaggeration of countless others, that had been living on lard and bread, with hot water for a beverage, for several weeks. The bread had been left by the generosity of the baker, by the way. These poor people were politically active and were afraid to go on the "parish" in case they might be forced into the "House." Comment is perhaps unnecessary, but surely those of us who have any social conscience at all, and understand the reason for this state of things, cannot fully enjoy any of the advantages which we may have, until something is done to remedy such poverty. R. MAYNARD BENNETT

4 Addington Road,
Sittingbourne,
Kent.

THE BUDGET AND LAND VALUATION

SIR,—The Chancellor's Budget surplus this year creates for him an embarrassment of riches. However he solves his problem of distribution, one thing is made clear by the present position of the public finances. There is no longer any excuse for holding up the valuation of land as provided for in the Act of Parliament which received the Royal Assent in 1931. The cost of the valuation was to be about £1,000,000, spread over two or three years. The plea of economy even in 1931 was pretty thin in view of the rich revenue-bearing prospects of this measure. With a surplus of over £30,000,000 this year and a further huge sum next year, there is now not the least justification for not carrying out the will of Parliament. The merits of the measure have been thrashed out in debate and the only question now is the implementing of the Act. The Government are under an obligation to provide the funds for the valuation, and they could do it without affecting the increase in the children's allowance, the restoration of dole cuts and other reliefs called for so urgently. It is in the interests of just these poorest and the unemployed that the valuation and taxation of land values should be effected. Only thus can the resources of the country be made available on easy terms, and schemes for housing, reclamation and development be made feasible and economic. The excuse for not fulfilling the law is now taken out of the mouth of the Government.

651 Didsbury Road, DOUGLAS J. J. OWEN
Heaton Mersey, near Manchester.

AFRICAN CHIEFS

SIR,—I was very glad to read Mr. Marquard's letter on the above subject in your issue of March 31st, as it confirms and re-enforces my own observations. I agree that the term "indirect rule" should be confined to a policy which utilises native constitutions and methods of government, and should not be applied to those chieftainships which have been divorced from their traditional functions. Unfortunately the term has been popularly extended to embrace every form of rule which is not "direct," and is thus incorrectly applied both to constitutional and arbitrary forms of government alike. It was for that reason that, when writing of Bechuanaland, I used the phrase "what is known as 'indirect rule,'" because though the system of government employed there is clearly not that of indirect rule, it has been referred to more than once in popular journals by that term. Mr. Marquard does a distinct service in emphasising the danger which I also had in mind, and I trust that in the future we shall have fewer strictures passed on the real policy of "indirect rule," when the general public realises the difference between that and the equivocal status of a chief, nominally ruling by virtue of inherited office, but in point of fact completely unconstitutional.

19 Dryden Chambers, J. H. DRIBERG
119 Oxford Street, W.1.

CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

SIR,—You appeal for briefer letters, so I will epitomise myself. I was angered by Dr. Harry Roberts' article on "The Psychologist and the Law-breaker," in your issue of March 17th. He seemed to urge that the science of psychology is so imperfect that the employment of the psychologist in our judicial system, either for diagnosis or treatment, is dangerous, and that he should be replaced by "any educated man of average sensibility." He proceeded to disparage "maudlin attempts to reform," partly for this reason, and partly on the ground that the sickness is not in the criminal, but in the social environment.

In the first place, the article was misleading. Criminal psychology is a young science, but it has made enormous progress in recent years, and this is precisely the time to encourage it. Further, even if the psychologist were banished from the penal system, reform need not cease, since the great bulk of reformative work is done not by psychologists but by educated men of average sensibility. The psychologist deals with diagnosis—or classification—and with specially difficult cases.

My main objection is to the suggestion that curative treatment and social reform, as remedies for crime, are alternatives. I object for the following reasons:

1. Even if we can design a crimeless society, its creation must take—to put it modestly—decades. In the meantime, we must do something with our criminals and our potential criminals.

2. Since environment does not act only in the crude way in

which Dr. Roberts envisages it, by making men steal because they are hungry, and break laws because they despise them, a man whom society has turned into a criminal may be cured. Environment acts most frequently through the family on the child, producing a maladjusted individual who, if cured—as he may be—will not return to the situation which made a criminal of him, the situation of a child in a family disorganised by poverty.

3. Social injustice is not the only cause of such disorganisation. The adaptation of the individual to social life is not a simple process and goes wrong for many reasons. Economic justice would not abolish crime. We do not yet know enough to be able to design the perfect family and the perfect society, guaranteed to produce no criminals. The curative work of the psychologist is increasing our knowledge of the causes of crime, and is, therefore, an essential part of the campaign for that social reform which Dr. Roberts desires.

4. Both Dr. Roberts and his anonymous doctor friend appear to set up their own limited impressions against the scores of scientific studies of exactly this problem, covering thousands of cases, which have recently been carried out all over the civilised world.

T. H. MARSHALL

LONDON THROUGH GERMAN EYES

SIR,—A recent German broadcast transmission purported to give a reconstruction of scenes in London, with comments by a German journalist. A few items may be quoted to indicate what the listeners were led to believe: it must be admitted that some of the criticisms were well justified, e.g., the difficulty of finding street-names (which in Berlin are on every corner), the price and warmth of the champagne at a night-club, and the survival of D.O.R.A. generally.

One scene reconstructed a short speech in the House of Commons, listened to in dead silence and followed by decorous hand-clapping: the journalist explained that parliamentary methods are possible in England owing to the inherent "chivalry" (*Ritterlichkeit*) of the nation, resembling that of the Prussian officer and the university "Corps" student (incidentally perhaps, the two types of Germans most disliked by the average Englishman).

Another reconstructed a breach of promise case, lasting five minutes. The procedure reduced itself to a short speech by the plaintiff's counsel who put a few questions to the defendant (no evidence, properly speaking, was given, nor was there any re-examination), and a similar speech by the defending counsel with a few questions put to the plaintiff, after which the Judge (who had hailed the German journalist as a club acquaintance across the Court) gave his decision, greeted by loud applause from the public.

The final scene was at the Military Tournament, to indicate the militaristic spirit of the nation, "the better elements of which," as an Englishman was made to say, "are entirely in sympathy with the new German Government."

R. R.

PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS

SIR,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer's recent review, "The School and the Boy"—why incidentally only the boy?—raises a number of questions of some importance to believers in progressive education and underlines a feeling which we personally have been coming to for some time, that the present tendency to confine such experiments to boarding schools suffers from a number of drawbacks.

There is first the physical overcrowding to which Mr. Mortimer draws attention and regarding which the majority of progressive schools, no doubt for economic reasons, seem little better than the others. This results in an entire absence of privacy, and when combined with the temptation, against which even the best schoolmasters are apt to struggle somewhat unsuccessfully, to organise all leisure, frequently means that the child has neither time nor place which can be called his own—in which he can simply sit and think, or even merely sit if the spirit so moves. The desire to be solitary occasionally is a perfectly normal one and one to be encouraged within bounds, for if it is suppressed the educational system is apt to produce adults incapable of depending upon their own resources, and who have neither the inclination nor the ability to be individuals as well as members of a community.

Moreover, the boarding school is by its nature withdrawn from movements in the world in which the child must later take a part. We suggest for these and other reasons that, where there is a normally happy and reasonably intelligent home life, the day school has a number of advantages compared with the boarding school. In the majority of homes the child will certainly have more chance of a room of its own and some privacy for its affairs than in a boarding school, while the home and school influences provide a valuable complement to each other.

Unfortunately, while most of the progressive co-educational schools take day pupils as well as boarders, they are too far out of London to allow those families where one or both of the parents work in London to live near them. We suggest that what is needed is a movement for the establishment of progressive co-educational day schools capable of taking pupils from kindergarten to university age, at first in the London area and later near provincial towns also, organised on lines similar to those of the Girls Public Day School Trust which, as you are no doubt aware, owns some twenty-six schools which are, of their type, of excellent standing. Possibly the financial difficulties in the way of such a scheme are too great to make it practicable at the present time, but if any of your readers are interested in the idea we should be glad to hear from them, to see if it is not possible to do something.

The Old Garden, Hillingdon, Middlesex.

JESSIE M. WILLIAMS
FRANCIS WILLIAMS

SIR,—I can assure Countess Russell that I look back on shoving snow down the necks of my friends as one of the major joys of childhood. But a snowball is not a cup of tea, and the friends could (and did) retaliate in kind, with no ill-feeling on either side. Apparently Countess Russell thinks that boys and masters should be on exactly the same terms as children are with each other. Here to my mind lies the fundamental fallacy of the progressive education—the sand upon which the whole structure is built.

Miss Isherwood suggests that the aggrieved master might have retaliated by humorously pouring his own cup of tea down the back of the offender. Well, well, we all know that humour is a difficult thing to define. However, let us suppose that the boy can see the humour of the retaliation. Then the progressive system of education has advanced as far as Gilbert's *Mikado*. But if the boy does not see the humour and tries to avoid the retaliation, then the master must use his superior physical strength to accomplish his end, in which case the progressive system has not advanced beyond Moses. Really, we can do better than this in the old-fashioned schools.

I cordially agree with Mr. Mayhew to the following extent. In what I should call a properly organised school, it would be unpardonable for a master to take the law into his own hands, even under strong provocation. For he could rest assured that neither the culprit nor any other like-minded boy would repeat the offence. But my original point was this: what remedy does a progressive school provide for hooligan conduct? I still await an answer.

C. H. TREMLETT

King's School, Bruton, Somerset.

WAGNER AND THE WHIRLIGIG OF TIME

SIR,—It would be an historical error to think that disillusion and disgust with the music of Wagner were either the discovery or the exclusive property and prerogative of the *musical* critics of the present day. Wagner's work at every stage of his career was not only received with vituperation almost unparalleled in violence by the press but it was despised, ignored or ridiculed by many of the leading figures in the German musical world.

Writing of musical life at Leipzig in the year 1879, Dame Ethel Smyth tells us that "people like Joachim and Herzogenberg considered Wagner a colossal joke, and I remember their relating how as a sort of penance they sat through a whole act of *Siegfried*, keeping up each other's spirits by exchanging a 'good morning' whenever a certain chord, let us say a diminished ninth, occurred in the score—a very provoking pleasantry to hear about." And in the nineties, when Wagner was "all the rage" in London, the case against Wagner (brilliantly stated by Nietsche) was constantly being restated (in France lucidly and logically, see the *Revue de Paris*, August (?), 1900) in England subtly by writers such as Vernon Lee and scholars such as Arthur Strong, both in public and in private.

All this had no effect on the public; when Wagner was given they continued to fill the opera houses and concert halls of Europe then as they do now. Mr. Turner thinks that by 1960 Wagner will be as dead as the dodo. Possibly. We cannot tell. There may be a reaction in another sense among the intelligentsia.

The brand new world of 1960 may possibly enjoy Wagner and they may think the taste of the post-war generation demented. The Aubrey Beardsleys of the future may exercise their satire on Russian ballet and negro jazz-band fans. All we do know is that the year 1933 has seen a revival of Wagner literature: three biographies of Wagner, one of them in English and French; and that in the last three years it has become increasingly difficult to get a seat in Covent Garden on a Wagner night, even if one takes steps in what appears to be a reasonable time beforehand. If you leave it to the last moment, it is impossible.

Half-Way House, Rottingdean. MAURICE BARING

A SAFER EASTER

SIR,—Under the heading "A Safer Easter" in your issue of April 7th are the words: "Anything that renders the cyclist less invisible after dark is to be welcomed . . ."

Will you permit me to remind my fellow readers that the principle underlying all our efforts to find a solution of the problem of road accidents after dark is *that the responsibility for visibility of other road users must rest upon the one who travels at the greater speed*, whether that one is a motorist, cyclist, horse-driver or pedestrian? The practical application of this principle involves the observance of only two conditions, viz:—(1) The user should be able to "see where he is going"; and (2) be able to act upon the knowledge afforded by such vision. HELEN ALSTON

New Malden.

THE COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

SIR,—We learn that a certain amount of regrettable confusion has been caused among persons anxious to support the aims and activities of the Council for Civil Liberties, by subsequent efforts to launch another organisation with a similar name.

This other organisation, calling itself the Civil Liberties Defence Union, of which Mr. J. George Stone and Mr. Leslie Carruthers were the co-founders, did in fact publish in the press on March 3rd a manifesto announcing that they had secured the support of Mr. Vyvyan Adams, M.P., and Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P. At a meeting held at the House of Commons between representatives of the Council for Civil Liberties, the above-mentioned Members of Parliament, and Mr. Stone and Mr. Carruthers, these Members of Parliament expressed some surprise at the manner in which their names had been associated with Mr. Stone's manifesto.

A fusion of the two organisations was suggested. Mr. Stone, however, has now intimated his refusal to discuss fusion. He has, we understand, enrolled a number of members in the Provinces, but he admitted at the House of Commons that he had as yet formed no central executive and that his organisation consisted only of himself and Mr. Carruthers. The latter has, however, now applied for Associate-Membership of the Council for Civil Liberties.

We have the evidence of our correspondence from all over the country to show how pressing is the need for organisation to defend from encroachment the hard-won rights and liberties of our citizens, and how lively is the interest in the work of the Council for Civil Liberties. We trust that this letter will suffice to dispel any confusion in the public mind which may have caused hesitation on the part of people anxious and able to co-operate usefully with us.

Embankment Chambers, 43 Villiers Street, W.C.2. HAROLD J. LASKI, G. E. G. CATLIN, RONALD KIDD (Secretary)

FILM CENSORSHIP

SIR,—Mr. Ivor Montagu, in your issue of the 7th April, draws attention to one aspect of the film censors' action in demanding that a film taken from a book or play shall be called by a different name. There is also the moral aspect. It is grossly unjust that no mention should be made of the name of the work which has suggested the film. In fact, when film companies take their theme and their characters from a book or a play, they should be compelled to give prominence to the name of the book or play. It is only when the name is given that the author is adequately protected from the ghastly suspicion of having himself been in any way responsible for the matter seen in the film. Those who have seen *The Lady of the Boulevards* but who have not read *Nana* might come away from the film with an undeservedly low estimate of Zola's powers. Whereas if the name of the book were displayed they could judge for themselves the relative merits of Zola and Mr. Goldwyn. The film censors, by giving way to their intolerable itch to alter, have done grave wrong to more than one author. PHILIP ARNALL

FAIR EMPLOYERS

SIR,—"Ex-Director" rightly explodes the fallacy of black-listing unscrupulous employers; but is there any sound reason why good firms should not advertise themselves?

I suggest that all goods manufactured under fair conditions of labour should be branded with an approved, and possibly international, mark which shall be known among consumers as a guarantee that such goods had been made according to an agreed code giving the producers concerned fair working conditions and wages. Goods advertised as bearing such a mark would readily find a market among consumers, especially if a little preliminary publicity on the matter is carried out through suitable channels. As a producer, I readily approve of my own idea; and as a consumer, I would most certainly give active support to any practical outcome of the scheme. "FACTORY"

EDUCATION IN GERMANY

SIR,—Mr. Karvé's figures (in your issue of March 31st) of admission to German universities are correct, but their interpretation is not so simple as he suggests. I have been English Lektor in a German university for three and a half years, and have watched the stream of students who had hardly any hope of employment when they had taken the final examination which, after a minimum of five years, admits them to further practical training for the public service, the so-called "Referendar" years, still unpaid. One man said: "By the time I get a post I shall be just about due for my pension." In the larger universities laboratories and libraries and seminars were sometimes so overfilled as to make satisfactory study impossible (of this I have no first-hand experience, but it is common knowledge). The previous Government deplored and lamented and said something must be done, but nothing was. All occupations were overfilled and many unsuitable people drifted to the universities because, once they had passed the school-leaving examination which also served as matriculation, it was better to study than to loaf.

The present Government, besides limiting admission, is requiring all students to do six months' labour service in a labour camp between school and the University. This not only relieves pressure, but teaches the students respect for manual labour and comradeship with the men (or women) of all occupations and classes who are their fellows in the camps.

I think I am right in saying that Jews are to be admitted in proportion to their percentage of the population.

I do not think anybody in close touch with young Germany to-day could accuse it of "inability for independent thought." Young Germany is facing up to a tremendous experience, assimilating, criticising, doubting, believing. I have never known such intellectual keenness, in spite of restrictions which it would be futile to deny. Those restrictions will tend to be tightened rather than relaxed, in so far as National Socialist Germany feels herself in a state of siege, surrounded by foreign lands which remain wilfully blind to the aims for the sake of which a keen and vital generation is accepting severe limitations as a lesser evil than disintegration, a *laisser faire* leading to moral and economic collapse.

115 Adelaide Road, N.W.3. MARGARET M. GREEN

Miscellany

CLASSICAL AND MODERN

THE present "Old Vic" company, which was in effect the nucleus of a National Theatre, has given its last production and will disperse to its various (and more profitable) functions on stage and screen. There is occasion, therefore, to assess the achievement. From the box-office point of view (I write without figure, but on common report), Miss Baylis must be well satisfied. A great many people have visited the "Vic" or Sadler's Wells who never thought of going there before; some of this public may remain, but most of it is likely to

drift away when there are few, if any, stars and the "Vic" has ceased to be a gambit in smart dinner-table conversation. The "regulars" have not, I surmise, been altogether pleased. They have a justifiable taste for more romantic methods, and the season's work has offered them unwonted doses of intelligence and less than their due of the poetical and the picturesque. I am aware that picturesque is nowadays an adjective of derision, but it need not be and I use it with respect. There is no reason why Shakespearean conservatives should be ridiculed and disregarded every time and all the time; and they have had some buffets of late both at Stratford and in London.

Mr. Laughton played four Shakespearean parts, Henry VIII, Angelo, Prospero and Macbeth; his Angelo was the most impressive, a study of inhibited and emergent lust in which his terrific emotional powers found full release. Both the Prospero and the Macbeth were closely rationalised. Mr. Laughton is, I imagine, an intense Shakespearean. Why otherwise should he forsake for two-thirds of a year the immensely greater rewards which he could win elsewhere? He has applied himself to the text as a vehicle of Shakespeare's mind, and the producer, Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, as well as other members of the company, have done the same. I have never heard Shakespeare spoken with more respect for meaning—and rarely with less consideration for music. Mr. Laughton has consistently raised two questions, whether a Shakespearean actor can succeed without a Shakespearean voice, and whether it is a profitable sacrifice to wring all the prose values from the textual treasury of vocabulary and metaphor and let the glorious noise go slip. He has given us unforgettable minutes, especially in his Angelo, in those passages of *Macbeth* where the intellect beats strongest, and in the exquisite valediction of Prospero which was a masterpiece of benevolent quietude.

Miss Flora Robson as Queen Katherine, Isabella, and Lady Macbeth confirmed all subsequent intimation of her greatness in attack upon the feelings. But the general tendency to drive at realism and to play Shakespeare with a restraint characteristic of our contemporary stage must have impeded her to some extent. One felt that if Mr. Guthrie had bidden her go forward, knock us all of a heap, and lift the roof she could have fulfilled his instruction to the letter. But the season has been as notable in its team-work as in its self-discipline. There were to be no fireworks. The tune was set in a minor key and the company conformed.

That is the modern way with the old familiar verses. Avoid the rant, fustian, and flamboyance of the romantic tradition; never intone a line in gleeful ignorance of all but its musical value. Abolish any scenery and alter any dresses which could possibly be associated with Bensonism. Let the fairies dance round a Bloomsbury bush. Bring the verse to the conversational level of modern comedy; only thus can real sincerity be conveyed. There was a time to apply such a therapy to the flatulence of the old heroic business at its worst and to the stupid convention of machine-made gestures and guffaws. It has been done, but done at some loss because so thoroughly done. It is worth remembering that Mr. Harcourt Williams had done it before and with more tact. The present season has offered us, in my opinion, less satisfying productions than those of three and four years ago when Mr. Williams was working with Mr. John Gielgud and Mr. Ralph Richardson. There was this difference, that the secondary parts have been better played this winter than ever in recent years. Miss Athene Seyler, Ursula Jeans, and Mr. Dennis Arundell were consistently good, and Miss Jeans's Viola opened the season with delight. But the Gielgud years combined a release from the burden of the tradition with a fuller recognition of what values the tradition contained. There were music and magic in the air. Romantic quality was not subdued or banished by intelligence. The eye was less teased and better satisfied. The decoration this winter has been so self-conscious as sometimes to deflect attention in dismay.

The rationalistic puncturing of bogus romanticism has now gone quite far enough, and the Governors of the "Vic" and Sadler's Wells will be prudent to take a step backward as the year moves onward—in short, to appoint a producer and select a company who will rediscover the simple theatrical effects, the resonance of diction, and the brave utterance of brave notions. If Mr. Roger Livesey will stay on he will be an admirable leader, for he can do the forthright stuff without any risk of collapse into fustian; he has a presence and a style which are adaptable to all kinds of role. He has many of the virtues of the old school while enjoying the experience of the new.

It was noteworthy that the "Old Vic" company played Tchehov, Wilde, and Congreve in addition to, and rather better than, Shakespeare. They were at the top of their form in *The Cherry Orchard* and *Love for Love*. One is left with the impression that it is possible to be too clever by three-quarters in producing Shakespeare, who wrote, after all, to set the groundlings on a roar and for a cry of players whom we should probably take to be clumsy ranters. It is often said that you can only produce a classic properly on the kind of stage for which it was composed; but why limit the doctrine to the architecture? The original public and the original players must also be kept in mind.

IVOR BROWN

PROMENADE IN SEVILLE

"QUIEN no ha visto Sevilla, no ha visto maravilla"—"he who has not seen Seville, has seen no wonder," is an old saying.

The travellers' guides most certainly consider Seville to be the most beautiful city in the whole of Spain; to me it seemed the one city which had sold itself to tourist traffic. Maybe the World Exhibition, the rich Americans, the Swiss hotel managers spoilt it a little, maybe it shows a different face during the "Semana Santa" and the "Feria" at Easter.

The cathedral is one of the most magnificent existing monuments to Gothic art, the gardens of the Alcazar are a fairyland of orange blossom, scent of flowering myrtle, and silver tinkle of fountains dreaming in an enchanted silence, but the town itself is utterly charmless. The neighbouring town of Cordoba, with its narrow winding streets, its old inns and jutting-out latticed windows, its unpretentious public squares and the Porto fountain of which Cervantes himself wrote, is far more beautiful and cleaner.

At every street corner in Seville, attached to the street lamps, are notices exhorting the passer-by in indecipherable letters to "come and see Sevilla," and, more visibly, to "visit the Kursaal," and in each of the numerous antique shops stacks of genuine plunder await transportation to the U.S.A.

I wander through the quiet side streets of Santa Cruz, peer into cool patios, examine the great majolica vases and the wrought iron grilles each of a new and intricate design, say "buenas dias" to the fathers, mothers, and children who prefer to spend the day there rather than in the house.

A stranger may walk blindfold and know at once whether he is in Madrid or Seville. His ears alone will tell him. The street cries of Madrid are hard and shrill, based on three blaring notes; those of Seville are long drawn, throatily Arab, a hoarse self-advertisement pitched in a sentimental key.

I go into one of the small wine shops, where great barrels lie among the shadows, and drink a glass of Manzanilla. The cellarman asks me whether I prefer to eat langostinos, almegas, caracoles, or ostras—langoustes, mussels, snails, or oysters—truly a land of plenty.

Outside, the vegetable sellers are urging their donkeys with repeated cries of "Oi . . . Burro!"

At the corner two old women are quarrelling fiercely; the violence of their abuse mounts with every minute.

What is it all about? Each district has a Madonna, and each district claims that its Madonna is the most beautiful, the most bountiful, the most miraculous.

"What!" screams Señora Concha, "you insult our Madonna? Did she not cure the son of Señora Velasquez, who was so lame it brought the tears to one's eyes to see

him limping along, and now he runs like a young horse? Was it not she who preserved Don Raphael from death when he fell off the top of the wall?"

"I was only saying that the family who won the first prize in the lottery, the cream off the milk, prayed to our Madonna to grant them good fortune. I remember you told me you had taken a ticket in the last draw—and didn't you burn a candle as thick as your fist to your Madonna? Well, where's the prize? Where is it? Why don't you show it? As for Don Raphael, he was as drunk as an owl when he fell off the wall, and the wall itself was no higher than my garden fence."

"You evil woman! Did your Madonna help you when you had that swelling? Everybody knows that your Madonna——"

Insults fly like the balls in a pelota game. The respective characters of the two Madonnas are torn to shreds, no action, no motive is too base to be attributed to them.

Nearby a church bell begins to toll. The two women separate, and I follow one of them to "her" Madonna. The interior of the church is bathed in the warm glow of a thousand wax candles, the Madonna, in a robe of stiff white silk, with embroidered mantilla and costly shawl, sits on her throne; in her hand is the Alcade's wand, symbol of power of the Spanish mayor, on her breast gleams a military decoration. Before her groups from clubs and societies are lined up, each with its flag, from the nave comes the sound of music and the voices of a choir of twelve who, led by a priest, sing a hymn in Latin.

The old woman kneels and eagerly begins to tell her rosary. Perhaps she is asking her Madonna to prove by some tangible miracle that she is, after all, the better Madonna of the two.

That afternoon I am invited to visit the house of a sculptor. He shows me his studio. In a dim corner of the room stands a plaster figure of a Madonna. Her cheeks are delicately tinted, her lips are scarlet, the sculptor points out with pride that the eyebrows are made of real hairs stuck on. She is as beautiful, as sweet, as simpering, as the people like her to be.

"For a church in Seville?" I ask.

"No, a village nearby ordered her, but they couldn't pay the price agreed upon. The peasants came to fetch her, but I wouldn't let them touch her. 'Let me see the colour of your money first, you scoundrels,' I said, 'then you shall have your Madonna!' And so here she is, among the lumber."

Poor Madonna. In the twentieth century, it seems, a Madonna cannot work miracles until she has been paid for in cash, down to the last farthing.

ERNST TOLLER

THE CENSOR AS NAZI APOLOGIST?

THE importance for the British public of a certain new German play, *Races*, by Ferdinand Bruckner, lies for the moment in the fact that the British public is not allowed to see it.

The circumstances of its banning at the hands of the Censor of Plays are interesting. Bruckner happens to be a far from obscure German author. Previous plays of his have been translated and played with success in Paris, London and New York. The present play is now running in Paris, and is in preparation by the New York Theatre Guild. The money had already been found for the London production, and a producer engaged. Why should Londoners—are we so irresponsible and inflammable, then?—be debarred from seeing what Parisians and New Yorkers may freely see?

The play is a study of German-Jewish racial feeling in a German university, fanned to flame by the coming to power of the new Government in March and April of last year. I have had the chance of reading both the German original and the translation submitted to the Censor. As far as such a play can be written objectively, it is written objectively. At least it can be said that both points of view, the German and the Jewish, are put forward with full and equal force. Perhaps the most interesting, and to some of us revealing, thing about the whole play is the new light that it sheds on Nazi mentality —the growing and overwhelming rush of enthusiasm of its hour of victory. The student Karlanner (who is not a Nazi at heart) describes his emotional experiences at a first university lecture after a new professor had been appointed: "Directly the professor appeared, everybody began to sing. It was overpowering—I wasn't expecting it. Presently, the professor joined in himself. He's sixty. Think of it! There were all sorts of marvellous new songs. . . . I felt I was the only one shut out." Almost immediately the language of the students becomes military. "We must be heroic. . . . students are not citizens but soldiers." They are given "areas of operation"; they are "on out-post duty to-night"; a lecture is given them before picketing a few Jewish shops against customers; "We're fighting in the front line! The eyes of the whole world will be on us. You must be equal to your task. . . ." Public opinion had been worked upon to a point where breaking a haberdasher's windows became part of a holy crusade of liberation.

This much is strictly true, and is known to be so by everyone (the present writer among them) who has had personal experience of the Germany of 1933.

The rest may be more conjectural. It concerns the story of Karlanner, a "pure Aryan" student, who is in love with a young Jewish mistress; and of Siegelmann, a Jewish student, who is beaten up in the course of the holy crusade.

It must, in fact, be conjectural, for the play is a genuine and personal drama, obeying drama's laws, and not a piece of vociferous propaganda. Siegelmann, the Jew, is beaten and publicly disgraced because he is a Jew at a German university—and told that he ought to be grateful for the lenient release. "Do you know what it is—a revolution. People are killed in revolutions. All that you'll get is a thrashing. . . . It will show the world with what discipline Germany is carrying through her revolution. . . ." The girl, after a long struggle to remain, flies the country. Karlanner, her Aryan lover, is "taken for a ride" by his Nazi friends because he has befriended her.

This is a very rough outline of the play. Its only propaganda, unspoken and only implied, is a despairing appeal to the Germany of Goethe—the Germany of toleration and intellectual achievement. It is studiously and extraordinarily moderate in tone. It is notable that the most extreme anti-Jewish sentiments given to German students in the play are in every case *less* vehement than those that have been publicly uttered a score of times by their present-day leaders. The play was recently played in a Swiss town with an important Nazi official in the audience. He was not too pleased with the play in its cumulative effect on the onlookers, but admitted quite frankly that there was nothing untrue about it, and that it represented what Jews in German universities had got to expect.

The question now remains, why should our own Censor have refused to let our own public see it? His reason, as given, is that if he allowed it he would have to allow two other anti-Nazi plays to which he has already refused permission. It is a reason that he can hardly expect to be taken seriously. What has one play to do with any other play? If the two other plays infringed any reasonable rules—if they held up to ridicule any definite public character, for instance—he was perfectly right to refuse his permission. But *Races* mentions no public character among the Nazis either by name or by implication. It is a study of a group of students, and of the mental and moral ruin that descends on them when an anti-Jewish pogrom is in force.

Two reasons alone remain, both uncomplimentary to the Censor—either that he considers the London public too childish to be allowed to draw its own conclusions from anything; or that he, a high official at the Court of St. James's, is more sensitive to the susceptibilities of the German Embassy than he has any reasonable right to be.

The English translation will shortly be published. Literature is still (at the moment) freer than the stage.

HUBERT GRIFFITH

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Drums Begin": *Embassy Theatre*

The anti-war propaganda in this Embassy Theatre production is muddled and abortive, and sounds like an afterthought. The making of a war-film, reigniting animosity between French and German soldiers taking part in it, and a woman spy of doubtful nationality are two of the play's wilted ingredients. It lives, if at all, by the ingenuities of its plot, of a terrifying complication but with decorations that are both impossible and amusing. The moral is ridiculous, and shrieks for deletion. Miss Joyce Bland has increased her resources as an actress and gives a gentle and explanatory performance of a part that needs it. Mr. Hay Petrie rattles through a series of inanities neatly, with a gesture for each point and a speed that ought to have infected the whole production. The language complications of a play about an American company making a film in Paris in French and German, with representatives of all the nations, might have been made easier by a general level of concise Oxford English. Some of the standard Oxford American was particularly trying.

"Sixteen": *Criterion*

Nobody hearing that this play mentions Freud and a mother fixation should be led astray into thinking of it as a pioneer work for the commercial stage. Its psychology is soberly amateur and unobtrusive. Though neither unintelligent nor insensitive, the play's virtues are entirely conventional; and it has enough of them to allow it to run for six months or a year. Its only fault is its lack of an elastic plot. The authors have overrated their powers of dealing psychologically with character, and have strained to breaking point the story of an episode in adolescence which they have taken as their subject. All the cards are on the table in their first half-hour, and for the rest of the evening the characters have nothing to do except comment on the situation and restate themselves. On the whole the interest is kept up remarkably well. Apart from some pedestrian business with a telephone in the last act, recalling the early days of silent films, there is all the technical skill one expects from the authors of *Nine till Six*. The girl of sixteen, played with appropriate mournfulness and avidity by Miss Antoinette Cellier, is a case who always threatens to become too much for the story. Completely satisfactory is the younger sister, whose effervescence has that exact photographic rightness that draws an audience every time. There is a brilliant cast, and the quality of the sentiment is above the average of its kind.

"The Sailors of Cattaro": *Phoenix Theatre*

The criticism of most revolutionary plays, if it is still allowed, is going to be a rather less ticklish business after the revolution. One will be able to estimate them with a freer conscience. For at the moment there is so often everything to be admired but the play. One is an enthusiast, for instance, for the Left Theatre itself. One's sympathies are deeply engaged on behalf of both those who produce, and who act for it: theirs is neither public recognition nor pecuniary advantage. Again, no one with a drop of revolutionary blood in his veins can remain unstirred unless the play is considerably worse than *The Sailors of Cattaro*. Yet there the fact remains it is not good drama. The piece, by Friedrich Wolf, in six episodes, of the abortive mutiny in the Austrian Navy of 1918, is of that kind in which the actors are compelled to rant the words, or hiss them. There are no alternatives. As it is impossible for any but the most accomplished to do this and be consistently understood, especially if they are frequently competing with a spirited orchestra, there were considerable gaps in Sunday's performance during which, resigned to the hubbub, one simply watched the crew at their chores. There were moments of suspense, and moments when the sly-boots Captain, with his "psychological" betrayals, rang almost true: there were pictorial moments, with bayonets. But a natural moment—a moment in which one felt nearer Cattaro than Drury Lane—never came. Never was one outside that curious, black-and-white world in which the pure revolutionary, like the pure reactionary, lives; a world in which there are devils and angels, but no people. And the sad thing about this world is, from a dramatic point of view, that the angels are always ranting, and the devils never cease to hiss.

Objective Abstractions: *Zwemmer Gallery*

Any activity whatsoever of a new-fashioned nature in English painting is so welcome that this exhibition, frailish though it be, deserves a visit more than most galleries. Unfortunately, the key, represented collectively by Messrs. Graham Bell, Rodrigo Moynihan and Geoffrey Tibble, is mainly interesting in one particular only, this being the odd fact that their paintings, *e.g.*, Nos. 1, 24 and 12, are positively indistinguishable, one from another. It is possible that they represent one man's quip, and yet from the gravity with which the elaborate and by no means undignified catalogue, with a questionnaire answered by the artists, has been compiled, I should guess not. The facts remain that there are the only three objective abstractionists, if I interpret the term aright, and that their work is entirely baffling. In the questionnaire, concerning their methods and ambitions, they are, on the other hand, the reverse, and one both understands, and admires, their opinions. Perhaps they should write, really. There are other artists, however: Mr. Ceri Richards would seem the most prepossessing, if least objective, and his No. 20, a nude, is quite excellent. The masses weigh heavy, yet are knit with great balance and freedom. His violin picture, No. 22, though less a whole, more descriptive, and chiefly to be valued for its colour, is extremely agreeable. Mr. Ivon Hitchens, less unfamiliar, has four pleasant exhibits. They are lively, if fidgety, in form, and perfectly controlled in tone, if a hint diplomatic in colour. To conclude, Mr. Pasmore marks a half-way point; a subjective abstractionist, possibly. To say he is reminiscent, in a smudgy way, of Bonnard, is not that he is mostly smudge, or that the rest is all Bonnard. But should paint be treated as if it were huge sticks of pastel?

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 14th—
- Association football. England *v.* Scotland, Wembley.
- The British Symphony Orchestra, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.
- Smeterlin. Chopin Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, April 15th—
- S. K. Ratcliffe on "The New Hero Worship," Conway Hall, 11.
- Film Society, Tivoli, 2.30.
- Croydon Film Society, Davis Theatre, Croydon, 2.30.
- Krishna Menon on "India To-day," Willoughby Hall, 1 Willoughby Road, Hampstead, 7.30.
- "The Master Builder," Westminster Theatre.

MONDAY, April 16th—
- Opening of Shakespeare Dramatic Season, Stratford-upon-Avon. Till September 15th.

TUESDAY, April 17th—
- C. S. Forester on "The Moral of Nurse Cavell," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
- Ernest Raymond on "Through Literature to Life," 254 Earl's Court Road, 3.
- Paul Robeson, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

WEDNESDAY, April 18th—
- Miss Helen Waddell on "Hermits," Bumpus' Court House, Oxford Street, 5.30.
- Dr. Marie Stopes on "Lord Dawson's Contraceptives Bill: What has happened and what must still be done," Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, 8.
- "Having no Hearts," Mercury Theatre.

THURSDAY, April 19th—
- Miss Cicely Craven on "Crime and Penalties: a Test of Civilisation," St. Edmunds, Lombard Street, 1.10.
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
- Mrs. C. D. Rackham on "Crime and its Punishment in the U.S.S.R," Conway Hall, 8.15.

Salute to Advertisers!

We take this opportunity of acknowledging the confidence shown by all our advertisers, who by their consistent use of our columns during the past twenty-one years have so substantially contributed to the success of this paper. We present our compliments particularly to the following twenty-one advertisers in this 21st Birthday issue whose announcements appeared also in the first issue of the *New Statesman* on April 12th, 1913. As it happens this issue contains twenty-one pages of advertisements.

Edward Arnold & Co., Thornton Butterworth (represented by Home University Library), Jonathan Cape (represented by A. C. Fifield), Cassell & Co., Chatto & Windus, Constable & Co., Heath Cranton, J. M. Dent & Sons, The Fabian Society, W. Heffer & Sons, William Heinemann, Herbert Jenkins, John Lane the Bodley Head, Sir Henry Lunn, Macmillan & Co., The Medici Society, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Martin Secker, Sidgwick & Jackson, W. H. Smith & Sons, Williams & Norgate.

NEW STATESMAN RETROSPECT

on its Twenty-First birthday

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THE WEBBS AND THE NEW STATESMAN

It was in the summer of 1912 that Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb and Mr. Bernard Shaw first discussed the founding of a Fabian weekly. They were not under the illusion that the job would be easy. It was no good thinking that a paper would succeed merely because a particular set of political and economic doctrines were forcibly expounded or even because a few well-known writers had promised to be contributors. They knew that politics were not enough, and that the intelligent public to which they wished to appeal would not regularly buy a paper because there was a chance of an article by Mr. Bernard Shaw. If the paper was to establish itself and to reach the unconverted it had to have more than independence, knowledge and occasional brilliance. It had to be constantly entertaining to the man in the railway carriage, and for that it needed, as Mr. Shaw said, a whole troop of young lions.

In the spring of 1913 Mr. Clifford Sharp became editor, the young lions were found, and a journal came into being which was collectivist in its economic policy, and which quickly attained by its expert guidance on foreign politics and its vigorous literary and political writing a position of national and international influence. In the article which Mr. Clifford Sharp contributes to this Supplement he recalls outstanding events of its early years, and shows, incidentally, how slow the march towards financial stability must be for a weekly journal which has nothing to recommend it except the fearlessness of its outlook and the intellectual quality of its comment.

Since the date at which Mr. Sharp's narrative ends, two other streams of talent and tradition have joined forces with the *New Statesman*. To-day, with the amalgamation of the *Nation* in 1931, and with the *Week-end Review* in the beginning of 1934, The New Statesman and Nation has a circulation of well over 20,000, and has achieved a position of economic security without any forfeit of editorial or financial independence.

In her unpublished diaries—readers of *My Apprenticeship* will remember that she has hitherto drawn on these diaries only up to the year 1892—Mrs. Sidney Webb has noted from time to time the stages of growth of the *New Statesman*, and commented on the personalities who were associated with it. The following extracts dealing with the foundation and first year of the paper are published here with Mrs. Webb's permission.

* * *

Oct. 10th, 1912

. . . It is annoying not to be able to complete that big task of historical research to which we devoted so much time and money. But there seems to be a clear call for leadership in the Labour and Socialist movement to which we feel that we must respond. For that purpose we are starting a new weekly next spring, and the planning out of this organ of Fabianism is largely devolving on Sidney. It is by far the most risky of our present enterprises. We start with a quite insufficient capital: £5,000 (Shaw, Whitley, Harben and Simon each £1,000 and £1,000 more in small sums), without the advice of any one who understands newspaper production. To the experienced journalist it must seem a mad adventure, and we ourselves hardly expect more than a run for other people's money and our own hard work. But then the London School of Economics did not seem much more promising, and to-day it rolls on majestically from success to success.

Christmas, 1912. Weymouth

Our plans for the coming year are already cut, I will not say "dried"—they are still moist with uncertainty as to detail. First there is the starting of the *New Statesman*. During the next three months we have to get, by circularisation, a large number of postal subscribers; if we can get 2,000 the success of the paper is secured; if we get only 500 it is extremely doubtful whether it can survive two years. Then Sidney and I have to contribute the long series of articles on "What is Socialism?" We have also to help Sharp to get other contributors.

Secondly, we have to complete the inquiry into the control of industry and draft the report, probably as a supplement to the *Statesman*. I don't feel anxious about this seemingly gigantic task—we could write the report now; and getting the new material is largely a method of educating our young people.

Jan., 1913

For the last fortnight I have been exclusively engaged in circularising for postal subscribers to the *Statesman*. We start with the clientèle of the Fabian Society, and the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution, and upon this we are building a card catalogue of 20,000 possible subscribers to the paper. To all the most promising of these we send out personal, to the less-promising manifolded, letters from me: G. B. S. and Sidney are appealing to the Fabians who are not members of the N.C. We have secured some 150 subscribers—I doubt our getting 1,000. To make the paper pay we must get a circulation, postal or trade, of 5,000.

* * *

Mrs. Webb then goes on to discuss the views of a group of critics, with regard to the *New Statesman's* chances. They put (she says) the lowest sales at which the paper can keep going at 3,000, and the maximum that we might get at 5,000. This cannot be done, they argue, unless we attract a good many different groups of readers. G. B. S., they think, is good for 500 to 1,000, the Webbs for 300 to 500, and Squire, if you please, for 100, making up 1,000 to 1,500 in all. Hence, the venture is bound to fail. The paper that will be turned out will be one-idead: the Webbs only know the social and economic question, and they will always be hammering at it exactly as Belloc and Chesterton hammer at the one theme of political corruption in the *New Witness*. How can they get a really well-informed article on Persia, for instance? The paper will be the Webbs flavoured with a little Shaw and padded with the contributions of a few cleverish but ignorant young men. People may take it in, at first, out of curiosity, but they will soon drop it.

There is truth in this criticism. . . . But I think that Sidney and I are not quite so one-sided as we look—we have never written on other questions, but Sidney has an encyclopaedic knowledge and we have seen a few things. G. B. S., if he really throws himself into it, has a far larger public than is thought by the Liberals, and I believe we can attract around us able persons of quite different interest and outlook and in harmony with our general position. And though we are

wholly inexperienced on the business side we have initiative, persistency and audacity, which more conventionally experienced persons lack. So I think that our friends . . . may be unpleasantly disappointed. However, they are obviously better judges than we are and the chances are that they are right. In that case we shall have spent our money and our time not exactly in vain, because we shall have raised the standard of Socialist journalism. If I were forced to wager I should not back our success.

April 8th

Our promoting is at an end and we start with 2,300 postal subscribers, a notable result. We are now at work on the series of articles on "What is Socialism?"—for the first twenty numbers of the paper. S. W. is booked for a weekly article on his own range of "expertise." G. B. S. has surprised and disconcerted us by refusing to sign any articles, but sends us three for the first number, and apparently means to write regularly. The first number will be brilliant, but it cannot be good.

Sidney is enjoying this work. Once again he takes the lead. He is a far more accomplished journalist than I, and he is the reputed father of the new venture. He likes Sharp and works well with him and he enjoys expressing himself on current affairs.

May 25

I find it increasingly difficult to find time or energy to write in my diary. The *New Statesman* absorbs both. We started with 2,450 postal subscribers. How many of these we shall keep depends on the uniqueness of the paper. There are all sorts of conflicting criticism—the paper is dull: it is mere brilliant writing, and there is not enough solid information; the political articles are good, but the literature "rot"; the literary side is excellent, but the political articles not sufficiently constructive.

April 22nd, 1914

. . . The renewals of the original subscriptions to the *New Statesman* are extremely satisfactory—some 1,600 out of the original 2,600 and others coming in day by day; we shall probably start the second year with at least 2,000 postal subscribers. What is unexpected is the trouble and cost of the renewals—due, no doubt, to lack of method in cataloguing. Now we have to make a success of the meeting of subscribers, and I have to prepare a short address on "The Contempt for Women in the Press of To-day." But oh, how tired I am: I should like, at least, a fortnight's complete rest, with nothing to do or think about.

EARLY DAYS

By Clifford Sharp

(Editor of the *New Statesman* from its foundation in 1913 until its amalgamation with the *Nation* in 1931.)

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb were the real founders of the *New Statesman*. In the autumn of 1912 their "National Campaign for the Break-up of the Poor Law," of which I had been "Director" (and Editor of its monthly journal, the *Crusade*), seemed to have come to a natural end for the time being. It had succeeded in the sense not of having secured immediate legislation but of having made it practically certain that, when Parliament had time to reform the Poor Law, it would be forced to deal with the problem broadly on the lines proposed by Mrs. Webb and her colleagues in the famous Minority Report of Lord George Hamilton's Poor Law Commission.

In the course of three years of intensive propaganda the "Minority Report" Organisation had accumulated a membership of about 20,000, a great many of whom had become ardent personal supporters of Mr. and Mrs. Webb, irrespective of party. Naturally, the Webbs felt that such a connection was too valuable to be broken up altogether, and so there arose in their minds the project of a first-class weekly Fabian review. They found four people, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, Mr. E. D. (now Sir Ernest) Simon, Mr. H. D. Harben, and Mr. E. Whitley to guarantee £4,000 between them. A dozen other friends subscribed a few hundreds more. We imagined that this should be enough to keep the paper going for about three years. Scarcely a thought of its being able to live much longer than that was in our minds at that time. We did not at all foresee how elastic the generosity of our backers was destined to prove. A Private Company was formed in October, 1912, and I was appointed Editor. Many names for the new weekly were discussed. The one ultimately decided upon by the Board was suggested by Balfour, then leader of the Conservative Opposition.

The first writer whom I invited to join the staff was my friend Desmond MacCarthy, as dramatic critic, the second, another old friend, J. C. Squire, as Literary Editor. These two, with Emil Davies as City Editor, constituted the whole of the permanent staff of the paper when the first number appeared in April, 1913. Mr. Robert Lynd, however, who was later, as "Y. Y.," to become the most permanent and regular of all the *New Statesman* staff writers, contributed a literary article to that first issue.

All the machinery of the National Committee for the Break-up of the Poor Law, as well as of the Fabian Society, had been employed to give the new paper a good start; and it had over 2,500 annual postal subscribers at a guinea each before the first number was printed. The privilege of paying 21*s.* instead of 26*s.* a year, though lifelong, was individual, and the promise that it would never be offered again, once the paper was on the bookstalls, was strictly adhered to. The number of those Original Guinea Subscribers has naturally, through death and other causes, dwindled year by year; but nearly a thousand of them still remain on the books of The New Statesman and Nation.

Political Policy

The policy of the new paper was from the beginning one of complete political independence. We were never in any sense a Labour Party organ. In so far as we represented any organised body of opinion at all it was Fabianism, not Labourism; and in those days the differences between the two were considerable. The Labour Party was small and not even a majority of its members in the House professed to be Socialists. It had, moreover, inherited through its "Lib-Lab" ancestors a number of Radical principles and prejudices which Fabians as such did not share. Possibly a majority of the Fabians at that time were Labourists, but the Society contained also a considerable number of Liberals, and there were, I recollect, at least three members of the Fabian Executive itself who, if they had been obliged to make such a choice, would probably have preferred to enter Parliament as economic rebels within the Conservative ranks than as loyal members of either of the other parties. The Webbs at that time had no party affiliations at all; and actually they were much more closely in touch with people like Haldane and the Balfours and Grey and Churchill than with Keir Hardie, Snowden, and MacDonald. They were Fabians, willing and anxious to "permeate" all parties with Fabian ideas. It was not until some four or five years later, towards the end of the war, that they began to concentrate their energy and attention upon the policies and the welfare of the Labour Party.

So the political independence of the *New Statesman* from its earliest days was genuine and complete. We did not merely profess to have no political affiliations; we had none. We were soon to discover, however, that a great many people who profess to admire independent political thought are apt to be both puzzled and shocked when they actually come across it. We were Socialists, we were Democrats, we stood for high ideals, we represented, or were supposed to represent, the most "advanced" thought; yet we most perversely declined to lend active support to all sorts of "advanced" causes—Proportional Representation, the Ending or Mending of the House of Lords, Birth Control, the Abolition of Capital Punishment, the views of the Eugenics Society, Anti-vivisection, or any of the various phases of the Back to Nature movement. We did not cry to heaven against the Sale of Honours, or the so-called "Marconi ramp." We refused to treat Free Trade as a sacrosanct principle, or heavy naval expenditure as a mere "armaments ramp." In foreign affairs we preferred the views of Sir Edward Grey to those of Mr. E. D. Morel, just as on educational and "temperance" questions we preferred Mr. Balfour's views to those of Dr. Clifford and Mr. McQuisten's (plus public ownership) to those of Mr. Isaac Foot or the Rev. Henry Carter. We approved of the military "conversations" with France and Belgium, and opposed the "Freedom of the Seas."

This last was perhaps our most heinous offence; for even Grey and Asquith, not to mention F. E. Smith, were then in favour of giving immunity to merchant shipping in time of war. But our standpoint was really simple enough. We desired the abolition

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of war and we published in a special supplement the first detailed scheme for the creation of a League of Nations that was ever worked out; but we held that in the meantime it would be of less than no advantage to the cause of peace that Great Britain should deliberately blunt the most powerful weapon in her armoury—the decisive weapon, indeed, as things ultimately fell out.

Readers' Protests

Naturally, many of our readers were a little bewildered. To some of them a policy of eclectic independence carried to such lengths seemed to savour almost of public indecency. Our letter box was always full of protests from subscribers. And thus very soon I learned to assess readers' protests at their true value—a very high value. For such letters were evidence of a lively interest, and lively interest whether against or in support of our views meant a live and growing circulation.

Probably we lost a few readers whose principles were outraged by our "contrariness"; but I fancy that far more often the indignant cancelling of a postal subscription was followed by an immediate order to a local newsagent. I remember that Mr. John Galsworthy wrote to cancel his subscription on account of a parody of Masefield that had been composed by Squire. It was certainly one of Squire's most ribald efforts, and I dare say Mr. Galsworthy never took in the paper again. But I remember another "Disgusted Reader" who, having informed us that he would never allow the paper to be brought into his house again, sent us a few weeks later another letter of protest on a different topic. He was careful to explain, however, that in order to avoid the risk of subsidising so pernicious a rag he now went to a public library to read it!

Sir John Squire

Squire's brilliant versatility made him an invaluable colleague in those early days. There was no part of the paper that he could not write at the shortest notice. He often wrote political leaders, and I am convinced that he could have written an excellent City article if Emil Davies had ever failed us at the last moment. If on the final page-proofs we found a few inches of blank space, Squire was always ready to fill it at once with a Letter to the Editor (probably the best of the week's bunch and usually signed "H. de B. Winton") or even with a parody composed on the spot. Incidentally, he was at once the most rapid and the most accurate proof-reader I have ever come across. No errant comma ever escaped his Solomon Eagle eye.

Squire was certainly the best English parodist since Calverley, or perhaps, as the Americans say, since the year One. His parodies were a great asset to the paper because they were so widely quoted in the general press, and I was very sorry when he told me one day that he would write no more of them because he thought they would be likely to prejudice the reception of the serious poetry with which his thoughts were increasingly engaged. At the time I thought his decision was as silly as it was disappointing to me, but afterwards I came to think that he was probably right. One cannot, let us say, write a sonnet "in the manner of Mr. Shakespeare" that is almost good enough to send the very elect wonderingly from chair to bookshelf and next day expect to get a sonnet in one's own manner taken quite *au grand sérieux*.

Mr. Bernard Shaw

Squire was also of great assistance in the matter of my dealings with Mr. Bernard Shaw—who was proprietor, director, and contributor rolled into one. Shaw regarded me as damned in any case. In November, 1915, he wrote:

> The difficulty with you personally is that you are a Tory in grain. You are shocked or irritated by stupidities or abuses; but not in the least by violations of Liberal principle. You have no patience with principle when a war is on and very little when a war is off. . . . It is your simple business to contrive that there shall be a political crisis every week to make the paper interesting and keep the interest of the public in politics (which are the *raison d'être* of the *N.S.*) up to steam heat. Only, you won't. . . . The N.S. never thought of going to MacDonald's rescue. . . . Ponsonby and Trevelyan are abandoned to their enemies. . . . Forgive my perpetual cavilling; but somebody must complain; it is for the good of your soul.

Shaw was not so certain, however, that Squire was damned too—perhaps because he did not know him so well—and he would sometimes listen to him. Apart from his frequent abusive letters, which we always, of course, enjoyed and which may, possibly, after all, have been of some good to my soul, Shaw was at all times generosity itself in his readiness to help in every possible way without ever casting even the shadow of a question upon my right to the last word. But all the same to a young and wholly inexperienced editor his contributions were a source at first of almost continual embarrassment. We saw eye to eye about next to nothing, except perhaps Ireland, Municipal Trading and the death duties. We did not even agree about the Income Tax, for that involved the question of whether authors' royalties should be treated as income or as capital increment.

The root of the trouble was that G. B. S. flatly refused to sign any of his contributions. He declared that it was the first chance he had ever had of using the editorial "we" and that he was going to make hay while the sun shone. Often, knowing that he had not to put his name to it, he would send me an article containing the most outrageous nonsense. More often, of course, he sent first-class stuff, but whatever subject he wrote upon he never considered for a moment anything that might previously have been said about it editorially. He used to complain that I inserted "not's" into his sentences. He was right. I sometimes had to.

Mr. Cecil Chesterton

One day I thought I had got a safe subject for him. Cecil Chesterton (younger brother of G. K., killed 1918) was being prosecuted by Godfrey Isaacs (brother of Sir Rufus) for criminal libel. C. C. had certainly "asked for it" with all his great powers of fluent and damaging invective, and in court he could not produce a leg to stand upon. I knew, however, that Shaw would defend Chesterton and wished that he should. But when the article came I found that it was based upon a complete misapprehension both of the facts and of the law. I sent it back to Shaw and explained the errors by telephone. He promised to put it right and let me have it first thing next morning—press day. In the morning I found the M.S. duly waiting for me. I found also that not only were all the original errors still there but that more had been added and the whole of them, as it were, doubly underlined. Something had to be done at once. A blank page or more had been left for the article and had somehow to be filled within thirty mintues or so. Squire and I set to work. Shaw's article was written in three long paragraphs, like a *Times* leader. We took the first paragraph almost as it stood, Squire wrote an entirely different second paragraph, and I wrote the third—using of course bits of Shaw. I have just re-read it. In its final form it was an admirable article.

We lunched at 10 Adelphi Terrace next day and Webb came too. After a prolonged argument G. B. S. admitted that we seemed to be right as far as the facts and the law went, but he insisted that one day we should realise that he had been right all along as to the underlying intention of the prosecution. The Government meant to put Cecil in gaol somehow and he (G. B. S.) wanted to checkmate their unamiable plans.

Mr. I. Zangwill

After this episode Shaw wrote little for the paper. He realised, I suppose, that the idea of his using the editorial "we" without accepting public editorial responsibility was not a workable proposition. He was always very friendly and jolly about it, however. One day Israel Zangwill sent me a letter criticising a criticism which we had published of a new play of his. Naturally I declined to print the letter. No point of fact was at issue, and a paper which once began to permit authors to use its correspondence columns to start discussions of their own works would soon find itself in a mess. Mr. Zangwill, however, wrote and complained to Shaw. Shaw sent me a copy of his reply. I can quote only from memory, but it ran roughly thus. "My dear Z., You complain that Sharp won't print your letter. That's nothing. You're not a proprietor; I am; and he won't print my articles."

Some time later Shaw sent me an unexpected review of a book by E. D. Morel about the war. I was slightly annoyed because on the same day Mr. Morel's publishers had the impertinence to send copy for a quarter page advertisement "to be printed on the same page as Mr. Shaw's review." As the review expressed throughout opinions diametrically opposed to those which had been editorially set forth week by week for the previous twelve months or so, it was impossible for it to be printed unless G. B. S. were willing at least to initial it. He was not willing. A month or two later he gave up his seat on the Board. I cannot pretend that I was more sorry than relieved, but I was sorry all the same, and never ceased to miss the stimulating quality of his letters and of his presence at Board Meetings. Several years later, at a

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO

1913 Twenty-one years ago appeared the first issue of *The New Statesman;* and in that issue was a half-page advertisement of books published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. That advertisement, it cheers us to say, can face the scrutiny of time fearlessly. We advertised eleven publications—an ordinary, typical selection from our list at that time. Of those eleven books *no less than six* are still in print and still in demand; and one of the others has only recently "gone out." Amongst our authors advertised were Conrad (TWIXT LAND AND SEA); Professor Emil Legouis—his CHAUCER is still a standard work for students—Edward Gordon Craig, whose TOWARDS A NEW THEATRE has greatly influenced the stage of to-day; Edward Hutton; Evelyn Underhill (her MYSTIC WAY is now in its fourth edition); and George Santayana. This record of "survival value" speaks for itself. In an age of mushroom businesses and ephemeral publications it is a remarkable testimony to the genuine, the useful, the prophetic, and the fundamental book—types of book with which, whether in science, art, philosophy, poetry, drama or fiction, the name of Dent has always been associated.

1934 To-day, in the twenty-first-birthday number of *The New Statesman*, we have a whole-page advertisement. In many respects the scale of our activities has doubled since 1913. But the principles which govern our publishing remain the same. EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY, for instance, now includes more than nine hundred volumes. But who can say of the Spring 1934 issues (which include MARIUS THE EPICUREAN, writings of Leibniz and of Goldsmith, and Aristotle's POETICS) that the standard of these two-shilling books has not been maintained? Turning to history and sociology the reader will find amongst our latest books a sane examination of MODERN RUSSIA by Cicely Hamilton (*7s. 6d.*; already in its second impression); Ernst Henri's HITLER OVER EUROPE? (*5s.*), which the *Statesman*, in common with several other journals, considers to be "the best work on the Third Reich that has appeared in English"; and a poignant personal record of WHY I LEFT GERMANY (*6s.*), by an anonymous German Jewish scientist. He will find, too, A. K. Hamilton Jenkin's fascinating record of CORNISH HOMES AND CUSTOMS (*6s.*). Will these books be read in another twenty-one years? We doubt if the historian can ignore them. And he will certainly not ignore Professor Taylor's masterly new translation of THE LAWS OF PLATO (*10s. 6d.*), a book which anticipated Fascism by a mere two thousand years or so.

Turning from books of fact to imaginative literature, the reader will be impressed by the development in our fiction policy. We have a strictly selective list of new novels, but three out of four have had a satisfactory "sales" success. Guy Pocock's DESIGN FOR A STAIRCASE has just been reprinted for a third time; and at the moment that exquisite midsummer night's dream by Lewis Gibbs, PARABLE FOR LOVERS, is in the midstream of praise. Harold Nicolson calls it "an excellent work of art." Perhaps Lewis Gibbs will be one of 1955's Grand Old Men! And there is Georges Duhamel, whose NEWS FROM HAVRE the Book Society is recommending next month. 1934 may assume some importance as the date when this superb French novelist first gained the serious interest of the British public. And as for poetry? A year or so ago it was said that nobody bought it, nobody read it, and hardly anyone wrote it. Nevertheless, 1934 sees the initiation by us of a uniform series of books of contemporary verse at the stop-me-and-buy-one price of half a crown. W. J. Turner's lyrical satire, JACK AND JILL, was the first; *New Statesman* readers will have got this by now. The second is Edwin Muir's VARIATIONS ON A TIME THEME. This little book has strong claims to permanency. And so, too, have Herbert Palmer's SUMMIT AND CHASM (*5s.*) and the forthcoming poems by Frank Kendon and Sylvia Lynd. And how about the many other varied volumes in our Spring and Summer lists? We invite you to send for the lists—if you have not yet had them—and see for yourself how our 1934 compares with the year when *The New Statesman* made its bow.

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critical moment in the history of the paper when Webb also had left the Board, G. B. S. came to my moral rescue in a most generous fashion.

Blue Book Supplement

In its very early days the *New Statesman* started to do something which had never been done before. It decided to treat Government publications as "books" and to review them. It issued a special monthly supplement of sixteen pages entirely devoted to this purpose. Every Blue Book or White Paper issued during the month was mentioned and a large number were reviewed at length. This costly enterprise could not, of course, pay its way, but it was, nevertheless, continued for three years and was not only very useful to politicians and social students, but won the paper a certain solid authority and prestige in official circles which it never thereafter lost. Looking back now, I should say that the Blue Book Supplement was indirectly worth to us more than all the cost of its publication. Amongst other things, it afforded an excellent background for the "collectivist" propaganda which was the main original purpose of the paper.

The Supplement was edited by S. K. Ratcliffe for the first half-year. Frederick Keeling then took it over, and joined the staff of the paper. Keeling was the most energetic and industrious man I have ever known. He used to run a mile or two round Lincoln's Inn Fields every morning before breakfast and then work all day and into the small hours. On all phases of the problem of unemployment (then quite different, of course, from the problem of to-day) he was, with I think no exception, the greatest authority in England. But he was an authority on many other things besides, and his output was so terrific that it became at last, in my eyes, a positive menace to the paper. I used to find myself on a Wednesday morning with perhaps a couple of articles and half a dozen notes from him, not very brightly written, but all of first-class quality and all "free copy"—since he worked on a small salary. It was a weekly temptation to which I was wont too frequently to succumb. The problem, however, solved itself in August, 1914. Keeling with Rupert Brooke and other Cambridge friends enlisted at once. The others took commissions, but Keeling preferred to join the ranks of an infantry battalion. Within three or four weeks he was a sergeant, and steadily refused further advancement. He was killed towards the end of the Battle of the Somme.

War Time Policy and the Censorship

In its issue dated August 1st, 1914, the *New Statesman* foreshadowed its attitude towards the coming war. The view we took was that the Government ought at almost all costs to keep out of a war which scarcely a single man or woman in England wanted, but that if war were forced upon us the Government must have and would have the full support of the nation. That general attitude, which by no means, of course, excluded the strongest criticism of the conduct of the war and a "bitter-end" opposition to the introduction of conscription, was substantially maintained until the Armistice.

In view of much that has been said, expecially abroad, about war-time censorship in England, I should like to place definitely on record here the fact that only on one single occasion did I ever submit any article to the Censor's office. This was a rather stupid and dull article which I did not wish to print, but which for personal reasons it was rather difficult for me to decline. I thought there was a fair chance that the Censor might dislike it, so I invited his opinion. He did not disappoint me, and the article was returned to its writer with a few casual comments upon the silliness of Censors in general.

On another occasion, however, I received a strong and threatening letter from the Censor's office, because I had printed as full an account as I could obtain of a speech by Mr. Lloyd George to the Glasgow munition workers, which the press had been forbidden to report. The Censor, however, presumably agreed with me that his threat was *ultra vires*, for when on general grounds of public policy I called his bluff, it collapsed, and I heard no more. Those two incidents comprise the whole history of the relationship between the *New Statesman* and the Censorship.

Mr. Lloyd George's Present to Us

We once, however, came into serious and most lucky collision with Mr. Lloyd George, when he was Minister of Munitions. We took him to task because, in a mood of not unreasonable irritation over avoidable delays in munition shops, he had gone too far in his denunciation of the British working man, and by arousing widespread resentment had only made matters worse. Our criticism irritated him into further indiscretion. He wrote accusing us of having completely misrepresented what he had said. His rude letter reached me on a Friday morning when the week's issue was already printed and ready for dispatch. I sent him an acknowledgment by hand, explaining why it could not appear until the following week. The next morning, however, a copy of his letter appeared prominently in every leading newspaper in England together with a covering letter accusing us not only of having misrepresented him, but of having deliberately suppressed his reply. The suggestion that any editor in Great Britain would wish or attempt to suppress a letter from the famous and all-powerful Minister of Munitions was, of course, ludicrously incredible, and so could do us no manner of harm. I wrote a brief reply—which was, of course, in common courtesy, given equal prominence in every reputable newspaper—explaining why the letter had not appeared, and saying that it would be published together with a full answer in the next number of the *New Statesman*. We had, of course, no difficulty in giving chapter and verse for all the statements to which Mr. Lloyd George had objected. It was magnificent publicity, an undreamt of piece of good fortune for us. We printed and sold a very large extra edition of that week's issue and gained several hundred new readers as a permanent addition to our circulation.

Circulation Figures

The growth of our circulation was in general very slow indeed. The steadiness of its growth, however, was so remarkable as very likely to have constituted a record in the history of journalism. Newspaper circulations vary seasonally, of course, being always larger, for example, in June than in August. But after the *New Statesman* had been in existence for a dozen years it was possible for us to state and to prove from our books that through all those 144 months there had never been one in which we had not sold more copies—if only a hundred more—than in the same month of the previous year. It appeared that we were slowly learning our job! But, oh, so slowly. It was a great day when we reached five figures and could print an auditor's net sales certificate to

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that effect. This certificate created considerable surprise and led to our discovering that "well-informed" outside estimates of our circulation at that time ranged between 2,000 and 5,000.

Forecast of the Terms of Peace

In the summer of 1916 we published, first in a series of articles and then as a pamphlet, an outline of the Peace Terms which the Allies, if completely victorious, might reasonably seek to impose upon Germany. Our proposals were intended only as a basis for discussion, but they turned out to be a very close anticipation indeed both of the armistice terms and of the draft treaties which were signed three years later with Germany and the Succession States. The differences, however, between forecast and reality were vital. We did not propose to separate East Prussia from Germany nor to hand over Eastern Galicia and Vilna to the Poles or the Austrian Trentino to Italy. As we did not foresee the break-up of the Russian Empire we suggested that a reunited Poland, to include Posen and Cracow, should be given full autonomy within the borders of that Empire. But the most important point upon which our tentative proposals differed from the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was that we expressly repudiated any demand for war indemnities, restricting "reparations" to the actual cost of repairing the damage done in Belgium and north-eastern France and compensation in kind for torpedoed merchant ships. No sum, moreover, even for actual damage, was to be demanded which Germany could not pay within four or five years as a maximum. I mention this publication here in order to record a curious fact. We were attacked in certain quarters in England for proposing terms so humiliating to Germany that she would be forced to fight to a finish. The pamphlet, however, reached Germany and was widely commented upon in the German press. The Jingo *Deutsche Tageszeitung* went so far as to describe our suggestions as an officially inspired attempt to make the German people believe that it would not be so bad for them after all if they were beaten!

Financial Problems

When at the end of 1916 I was called up for military service under the Derby Scheme Squire took over the editorship. I returned two years later to find the position of the paper substantially improved in respect both of circulation and of prestige. On the financial side, however, owing to the increase in printers' wages and the scarcity price of paper, the weekly loss had reached what was for us an almost terrifying figure. And things got worse instead of better. During the year 1919–20 the approximate loss was £4,000 and in the following twelve months £6,500.

About this time the paper was deprived, by an illness which eventually proved fatal, of the services of its original Manager, Mr. R. B. Byles. The present Manager, Mr. J. H. Roberts, who had been a junior member of the business staff before the war, was appointed to take Byles's place. I should be much understating my self-satisfaction if I said that I never afterwards regretted my part in that appointment.

Roberts and I were faced with the urgent task of persuading the Directors that in spite of a loss of over £120 a week it was but the darkest hour before the dawn and that the paper was worth carrying on. We knew that the price of paper was about to fall heavily and we produced a series of hypothetical future estimates of varying degrees of optimism. I think that perhaps Roberts at that time had greater faith in those estimates than I had, but we certainly neither of us dreamt that our most optimistic suppositions were destined to be surpassed within two or three years. By April, 1923, however, we were able to give substantial grounds for estimating the prospective loss for the ensuing twelve months at less than £1,000.

About five years later it was actually possible to show a profit of thirty shillings or so, on an interim six months' account, in spite of the fact that we were paying contributors slightly higher prices for their work than, I believe, any English weekly review had ever done. The profit was never repeated prior to the amalgamation with the *Nation*. But still it was a profit, and since, apart from the old-established *Spectator*, no sixpenny review in London had during the present century come even within £1,000 p.a. of paying its way we regarded that thirty-shilling surplus, even though it was only on paper, with a very great deal of satisfaction.

Lord Passfield's Resignation

I have always thought it a little strange how many people there are who like to have a more or less expensive finger in some

journalistic pie or other, without in the least wishing to dictate to the cook or even to ask to see the menu in advance. The interest of the original Board of the Statesman Publishing Co. in the conduct of the paper was, however, by no means that of the well-to-do dilettante, and the complete freedom which they always gave me was therefore the more remarkable. Apart from the general denunciations which G. B. S. occasionally felt moved to address to all his fellow directors, policy was scarcely ever even mentioned at the quarterly Board meetings. I do not suppose that any young editor who was not also effective proprietor—as Scott was of the *Manchester Guardian* and Strachey of the *Spectator*—had ever had so free a hand as I enjoyed. Every Tuesday Squire—accompanied sometimes by Lynd or MacCarthy—used to lunch with the Webbs at Grosvenor Road. But even at these gatherings Webb, although he was Chairman of the Company and contributed an unsigned article almost every week for the first seven years, was always careful to avoid even the appearance of seeking to direct general policy. He no more tried to influence me concerning politics than he did Squire about books or MacCarthy about the drama.

When later on, however, he entered Parliament as a Labour member and joined the first Labour Cabinet, difficulties inevitably arose. The public insisted on regarding the *New Statesman* as at least a semi-official Labour Party organ and no disclaimers on our part could remove that impression. Such disclaimers were widely thought indeed to be rather disingenuous, and criticism of the Party's policy constantly led to charges of "disloyalty." We had in fact, of course, no closer *entente* with Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Thomas than with Mr. Asquith, Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Lloyd George, and no question, therefore, of loyalty or disloyalty could possibly arise in any circumstances. Webb's position, however, was obviously an embarrassing one, and ultimately, to the regret of directors and staff alike, he felt obliged to resign first the Chairmanship and then his seat on the Board.

The General Strike

During the long and arid years of Mr. Baldwin's last Premiership the General Strike in May, 1926, was almost the only exception to the dead level of dreary dullness which extended all through the public life of the country. One had the sensation of being stifled. It seemed impossible to break through the pall of stale smoke which arose from Mr. Baldwin's sluggishly smouldering shag.

But the General Strike was interesting enough; and it afforded us the opportunity for a professional scoop of which the Manager had every reason to be proud. For in the first week of the Strike the *New Statesman* was certainly the only weekly and almost the only London newspaper of any description (except, I am told, *The Feathered World*) which contrived to carry on "business as usual." We appeared at the usual time and in our usual form. The pages were fewer and the type smaller than the normal, but every regular feature was to be found—Comments, Articles, Y.Y., Correspondence, Miscellany, Drama, Reviews and City. The issue was printed in a small one-horse sort of establishment which Roberts discovered somewhere in the south-western suburbs. I went there to see the paper through, but I forget exactly where it was. Anyhow it was not picketed. Every postal subscriber received his copy as usual. The problem of retail distribution was more difficult, but we solved it in the Metropolitan area by engaging street newspaper sellers and enlisting the help of friends with motor cars.

The print-starved public who were paying 2*d.* for a single sheet of manifolded typescript would have bought up our whole edition twice over if we could have printed more rapidly. Some of our readers seemed inclined to mumble the phrase "scab labour" when they first set eyes on that issue, but when they had read it we obtained forgiveness. For we had no hesitation in supporting the strikers without reserve. We had always, of course, condemned the weapon of the General Strike on the practical ground that it was certain to break in the hands of anybody who attempted to use it in furtherance of an industrial dispute. But if the Union leaders had been unwise the conduct of the Government had in our opinion been criminally foolish, negligent, and provocative. The section of the Cabinet which, under the leadership of Mr. Churchill, wanted the strike, in order to crush it and hamstring the Unions as effectively as possible in the reaction which they foresaw, proved too strong for the more moderate group, and so the conflict was quite unnecessarily precipitated.

On that ground alone our sympathies if not our judgment were wholly with the strikers, but our attitude had older and deeper foundations than that. For though in the political sphere we

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had never found it possible to place great confidence in the wisdom or breadth of vision of the Labour caucus, we yet held that in the case of a strike or lock-out in the industrial field on any really large scale the men are always found upon investigation to be at least morally in the right, by any acceptable code of social ethics. It was might, however, not right that ruled in such matters when Baldwin ruled.

The "Quickening" of the New Statesman

From what I have said about the completely free hand that I enjoyed as Editor of the *New Statesman*, it must not, of course, be inferred that the paper's "personality" was identical or even corresponded very closely with my own. I was associated from the outset with a group of men of strong originality of mind and purpose. There were Webb and Squire and MacCarthy and Keeling and Lynd and C. M. Lloyd and G. D. H. Cole and "Lens," every one of whom (except Squire and Keeling for a time) had larger interests outside than inside the walls of 10 Gt. Queen Street. All these played their part in a very real sense in the creation of the paper; and my main job, as I saw it, was to take care that the product of our co-operative enterprise should possess a "personality" representing a multiplication rather a mere addition of our several and separate personalities.

When after a year or two the paper quickened and became a living creature my task became increasingly easy. For with that instinct which every journalist must possess or acquire, we all began to express in our writing not so much our own views as the views which we thought the *Statesman* could and should express. For my part I not only printed (unsigned) articles with which I did not fully agree but I quite often wrote them. I was conscious, that is to say, of possessing certain deep personal tastes and prejudices which I had no right to foist upon the *Statesman*. Child of mine though it was, it was something much bigger and broader than I.

It was because this was what I wanted that I was so anxious from the outset to have as few signatures as possible in the paper. Some people thought me wrong about this, but I was sure. It is true that a few writers (G. B. S. was a notable example) tend to be less careful about what they say when they have not got to put their names to it, but there is another side to the picture. Is there a journalist in England for example, who if he were asked to write a leading article upon an important subject for the *Times*, where his words might quite possibly be read by all the rulers of the civilised world, would not put his last ounce of thought and effort into the job, avoiding even those small slacknesses of style or accuracy which he might permit himself even in signed work elsewhere? In that respect the *Times* was always my model, and over and over again in later years, when I replied to a question as to the authorship of this or that article or review I was met with the comment, "Really? I had no idea that B—— could write as well as that." Many of our writers recognised themselves, indeed, that they were apt to write better in our columns than anywhere else.

Various Appreciations

Once I was told by one of my Directors that S. (the *doyen* of English political journalism) had volunteered at a lunch table the opinion that I was the best leader-writer in England. On further inquiry I found that there were two recent articles which S. had particularly in mind. Both of them had been written by one of my colleagues, to whom I joyfully conveyed S.'s tribute. I was in fact more pleased than if I had written the articles myself because I knew S. very well indeed, and if he could not distinguish my work from that of a colleague it meant to me that the paper had really achieved a pretty high degree of unity of style and purpose.

There were other tributes that pleased me. Lord Northcliffe once told me that he thought our anonymous comments on American affairs (for which S. K. Ratcliffe was responsible) were the best informed of any then appearing in any paper in Europe. And he paid a still greater compliment to our Paris correspondent, Sisley Huddleston, by appointing him, out of hand, as it were, chief Paris correspondent of the *Times*. Northcliffe was a journalist as well as a newspaper proprietor, and it was typical of him that when he engaged Huddleston to write exclusively for the *Times* he specifically agreed that his signed contributions to the *Statesman* need not cease.

I dare say that few readers who have not troubled to buy the half-yearly index, wherein, as in the *Punch* index, all names are given, are even now aware that during a whole decade G. D. H. Cole must have contributed an average of quite four columns a week of editorial matter. It may be imagined that Cole and Lloyd and I were by no means inclined to see eye to eye on all departments of public affairs, and had we written over our own names elsewhere we should certainly have displayed marked differences both of tone and of substance. Yet I do not remember that we ever differed seriously as to what line ought to be taken in the *New Statesman*, and often it did not much matter, after we had talked all over and round a subject, which one of us actually wrote the article.

Cole seemed uniquely to combine all the spirit of the Left Winger with that habit of unflinching intellectual analysis which is supposed to characterise only Right Wingers, and few even of them. I have never forgotten his saying to me one day that while he found his faith in Socialism and Communism as systems of society tending steadily to dwindle he was becoming a more and more convinced believer in "Social Revolution" as an indispensable preliminary to any social progress that was really worth bothering oneself about. He was surer of the method than of the precise end. I do not know whether he is still of the same temper, but I am sure that that temper supplied an element in the composite personality of the *New Statesman* which was as valuable to it as the great range of knowledge which he brought to its service.

In certain respects, we each of us occupied, as it were, recognised "spheres of influence." Cole had, for example, an almost free hand about Trade Union affairs, subject only to any strong objection on the part of Lloyd or myself. Lloyd again generally dealt with questions relating to the League of Nations, about whose proceedings I often found it difficult to write with that minimum degree of patience and civility which (as Editor) I thought they should be accorded. Lloyd also dealt with the Balkans and the Near East. Here, he was markedly less sympathetic than I with the point of view of the Palestinian Arabs, and occasionally when he was away and a riot, perhaps, occurred in Jerusalem, I escaped the Scylla of attempting to follow his line and the Charybdis of breaking it by sailing away elsewhere and leaving the subject alone!

Lloyd's task, however, when I happened to be away, was much more difficult, for my "sphere of influence" included India and

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the Empire, and all the major political issues at home—from decisions upon which it was impossible to take refuge in flight.

In general, however, our mode of collaboration worked very well indeed. It was founded originally, I suppose, upon the attitude of the Webbs towards myself in the very early days of the paper. At any rate, there is nothing in the memories of my eighteen years' editorship upon which I can now dwell with more satisfaction than upon the continuity and coherence of policy which we contrived to maintain without, I think, any of those sacrifices of clearness or of vigour which are commonly associated with compromise. We did not compromise. Sometimes we agreed to differ amongst ourselves, but always we agreed that whatever happened the *New Statesman* must never be allowed to occupy the inevitably futile and undignified position of a seat on a fence.

WHAT THE NEW STATESMAN HAS MEANT TO ME

I expect it was Shaw who suggested that I should be the dramatic critic of the *New Statesman*. I had written dramatic criticism for the *Speaker*, but when that paper turned into the *Nation*, the new editor, Massingham, had no use for me.(1) It was an enormous relief to get regular work again and, too, better paid work. The *Speaker* had only been able to afford thirty shillings for dramatic articles even when they ran, as mine often did, to two thousand words. The *Eye-Witness*, on which I had next depended to save me from nibbling away too fast my small capital, had been most erratic in its remunerations. We were all of us, Belloc, the two Chestertons, Maurice Baring and I, paid at irregular intervals, and we tried to think of an explanation which would account for these incalculable but blessed spates of money. Oddly enough, they seemed to coincide either with our employer's buying yet *another* paper, or with his starting a publishing business, or with abrupt disappearances abroad—in fact with moments when you might have expected money to be tight. We entertained the idea that he must be the illegitimate son of a Russian countess of immense wealth living on the Riviera, whom he could periodically tap or blackmail. He was an open-handed man. The only benefit he ever got himself out of feeding us that I could see, was one review of his own book of verses which all other papers had ignored. It was a difficult review to write, still we had three men of genius (they were poets too) on the staff, and between them, and with Cecil Chesterton also pulling his weight, it got written. However, the real explanation of the money-situation proved different. Suddenly, our employer was charged with bigamy and embezzlement. I was left with a stuma of thirty-odd pounds (two months' earnings); a sum which I gratefully recall was made up to me by a subscription among my friends. So I lost nothing—not even my job, for the paper turned into the *New Witness* and continued to employ me until it lost the Marconi libel-case, after which it became a shakier support.

All this leads up to explaining what the *New Statesman* meant to me when it started: it meant Security (in so far as it is obtainable by journalists), and it was—Opportunity. I had a high opinion of myself as a critic, which was only occasionally shaken, and I knew that I sometimes wrote well, though at other times with an involved limpness most distressing to me. I thought I could hold the job: two guineas a thousand plus ten shillings extra for attending theatres (extracted from Sharp while strolling on the cliff-top of Beachy Head), and reviewing at the two-guinea rate. It was a beautiful prospect. It promised not only Security but the delight of expressing oneself before an audience which would see when one had hit, or missed, a mark. And there was another aspect agreeable to me. The *New Statesman* was out to improve the world, to correct the injustices of the social system, to stick up for the have-nots. I had, and have, the vaguest notions as to the best means of accomplishing these ends: but provided that I am not obliged to help myself, I like to be associated with others intent upon them. It was therefore delightful to me that Shaw and the Webbs should be directors of this new paper and that the editor himself was an ardent Fabian. The atmosphere of the other papers for which I had worked had been radical, not socialistic. Temperamentally, they suited me better. But so far as I gave social questions a thought (and I did so only in connection with the study of human-nature) I was prepared to believe that the Fabians knew what was what, that genuine statesmanship was a prosaic grammatical kind of business (I still believe this), that all sorts of rules and regulations (and prohibitions alas!) were absolutely necessary if more people were to have elbow-room and a fairer chance on this over-crowded competitive planet.

The *New Statesman* was destined sometimes to shock me by its recommendations, or, more accurately, to prompt the reflection, "Oh dear, that would mean the end of a good many things I care about. What a world we shall end up with—if they get their way!" However, the paper cared about *justice*, and that was all important.

I found, when I got to know them, that the Webbs were less unfair to my friends, though they were decidedly firm about them, than my friends were about the Webbs. In their company I came across a purposeful magnanimity—not at all imposing, indeed almost mechanical—which, however, impressed me in the end as one of the most genuine things I had struck in human nature; also, a persistence of purpose which, though it arranged experience in a perspective not alluring to me, made the flashes of generous indignation, to which I responded readily, look rather cheap. And then there was Bernard Shaw! For him I had—and still have—a hero-worship; one which no amazed exasperation, either at some of his utterances or at the limitations of his genius, seems to make the slightest difference. In the heyday of his narrower but more select fame, he was known as the "inimitable" G.B.S.; to me he was, and is, the "indispensable." What indeed shall we do when there is no one gaily and truculently to blow the gaff!

When recalling what the *New Statesman* has meant to me, these things seem important. Of course to some certain extent I was a fish out of water in such company—or rather not out of water, for I was always easy and interested, but a fish in a strange tank. When I used to lunch with the Webbs, the talk took for granted much knowledge I did not possess. References by means of initials often bewildered me. I remember once inquiring what "the L.G.B." was, and the note in Webb's voice when he replied—I will not call it either impatience or contempt, which

(1) Massingham said later that this was one of his mistakes as an editor.—Ed. *N.S. & N.*

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ago a selected list of books was displayed in these columns. To-day, as then, we respectfully draw attention to some new and important publications.

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were absent from his conversation—nevertheless fixed for ever the information in my memory.

I recall a week-end at Beachy Head, shortly before the paper started, to which the Webbs had invited its future staff; Squire, the literary editor, whom I already knew rather well from working with him on the *New Witness*, and of course, Clifford Sharp, whom I then met for the first time, and others. What has remained with me are the two scraps of conversation. H. G. Wells, as we were all aware, had guyed the Webbs in *The New Machiavelli*, and he had recently published another novel. I remember Beatrice Webb saying cheerfully, "I'm in it; I'm the woman whose voice is described as 'a strangulated contralto,' but *you* are not, Sidney." "Oh yes, I am," said Webb, speaking from a sofa on which his legs and feet looked absurdly small in comparison with his broad brow and head, "Oh yes, I am, I'm described as one of those supplementary males often found among the lower crustacea." This smiling serenity made me feel that I was indeed in high and good company.

Late that evening Bernard Shaw arrived fresh from his mother's funeral. He remarked on the soundness of the military instinct regarding such ceremonies: on the way to the grave one wanted solemn music; on the way back, a rousing march. But divining that I was slightly startled by this detachment, he turned to me and—with a casualness which made a deeper impression—added "You mustn't think I'm a person who forgets people." I instantly knew that to be true. What had interested me was not the apparent heartlessness of such a comment, but the light it threw on Shaw the artist—on that extraordinarily *objective* attitude towards emotions which is the source of the splendid penetration in his plays and, in spite of his tolerant sympathy with such a variety of types, of their imaginative limitations.

These memories may seem irrelevant, but they strike me as throwing light on the *New Statesman* during its early years—its high dry detachment from personal and (above all) from self-delighting emotions, which if bracing was certainly austere. I was to feel on occasions an inclination to apostrophise my paper, "Come down O Maid from yonder mountain height." The *New Statesman* invariably emphasised the least gratifying reasons it could for any generous policy. In this respect it contrasted with its rival, the *Nation*, now happily united to it in holy wedlock. Both papers often moved in the same direction, but while the *Nation* supplied arguments which encouraged its readers to feel that they were the salt of the earth, the tone of the *Statesman* in arguing the same point would be, "If you *want* to escape being a short-sighted fool, this is the line you must take." This austerity was as marked in the admirable articles of our Editor—taut arguments released with a whizz like a steel spring, as it was in the atmosphere he created in the office. We were never permitted to forget that whatever our own work might be doing for the paper, it was nothing compared with what the paper was doing for *us*. This was salutary for writers like Squire, Lynd and myself whose contributions were signed. We were never encouraged to think ourselves indispensable; a persuasion to which journalists of our type are too prone. True, it made the atmosphere sometimes a trifle wintry, and Jack Squire, Robert Lynd and I used occasionally to give each other a little warm shower-bath of praise—as a relief. At the same time we felt complete confidence in our editor's loyalty, while every week in his and in C. M. Lloyd's anonymous articles we had before our eyes an example of the possibility of keeping apart satisfaction in doing one's best and the desire to get credit for it—a dicotomy upon which civilisation largely depends.

Clifford Sharp possessed in an extraordinary degree two of the rarest editorial qualities: Creativeness (the power of blending a whole paper into a publication of homogeneous character) and Decision. He never waited for the cat to jump, but sprang to conclusions. He was also, which is not so rare a quality, devoted to the interests of his paper. After I became Literary Editor in 1920, this business of maintaining a pervasive tone sometimes led to differences between us, when I would be often exasperatingly elusive and he would be often very rude. Seated opposite each other at the make-up hour, he would glare and I would despair—but not reform. He wanted the literary side of the paper to be readable from beginning to end. I did not care if there were items in it which the average intelligent educated person would skip, provided most of the paper appealed to him. It seemed to me, in the long run, better for our prestige that a good author should say "Of course, all the reviews have been piffle—except perhaps one in the *New Statesman* which showed that the man knew what my book was about," than that the A.I.R. (the Average Intelligent Reader) should be deluded on every page into supposing himself interested in, and instructed in, subjects about which he would really remain for ever as ignorant and indifferent as an owl. Again, Sharp insisted on a firm macadamised surface, while I liked it to be broken by those wild green sprouts of folly which are apt to appear in the work of writers when they care about their work. I didn't mind (or even notice) a little bad grammar, especially when it seemed due to a quiver of sensibility, and to call Housman "Professor" in one sentence and "Mr." in the next, did not, if I observed it, seem to me to matter. But to Sharp these were *blots*, symptoms, too, of a confounded inefficiency which I exhibited in other departments of my work. Still, we had in common a strong dislike of brilliant, pretentious nonsense, and a well-concealed respect for each other which made our collaboration interesting. Besides this tug between us was, I believe, very good for the paper. If Sharp had not been the editor he was, the literary side would have been slovenly; if I had not been—well, what I was, readers of that part of the paper might have often hardly known whether they were reading a current issue or one a month old. But as it was, our combination sometimes resulted in a paper which, from the first note to the last shorter notice, was more remarkable than any single item in it, and that was saying a good deal.

Architecturally, our editorial premises rested on the business offices, and I was conscious on my top-floor of Altantean support from below of Roberts and his (sometimes) gloomy men. Still more often present to me was the *New Statesman's* debt to its Secretary, and especially my own debt. Mrs. Vincent was not only equably and promptly practical, but as far as I was concerned she developed an extraordinary instinct for distinguishing beforehand between the kind of engagements I would and those I would not ultimately keep, thus saving others from inconvenience and me from shame. "Oh no," she would say gaily, over the telephone in answer to some reasonable or even to some delightful suggestion, "He won't do *that*," long before I had any notion that I wouldn't myself. Those awful Literary Supplement and Library-list rushes—I remember them well! How she would stay with me till after eleven at night, doing my work with me, seeing that Edmund Gosse did not figure as Edmund Goose

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and that other hardly less disastrous errors were avoided. When at this moment I think back, specimens of that strangely impassive race, the Printer's Boy, also rise before me, patient figures contemplating with the resignation of disillusioned sages, and for hours together, a few yards of gritty stair. Those narrow stairs! Perhaps I can best sum up "what the *New Statesman* has meant to me," by saying that though I seldom mount them now, I hope to do so, intermittently, even when I have to pause on my way up, for it is the glory and curse of my profession to go on till we drop—or are dropped. DESMOND MACCARTHY.

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THERE is an old moral rhyme about little drops of water and little grains of sand and how, so to speak, they mount up. Any journalist who has contributed regularly for twenty-one years to a weekly paper must, on looking back, be astonished at the sheer bulk of words that he has turned out. Twenty-one multiplied by fifty-two makes, if my counting is right, 1,092. That gives you, approximately, the number of articles contributed. As each of them contained, on an average, fifteen hundred words, I reckon that I have written for THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION something approaching 1,600,000 words. If this be imputed to me as a crime, my excuse must be that my poverty, and not my will, consented.

It is true that, though I wrote a review of the life of Cobbett for J. C. Squire for the first number, I did not begin writing a regular middle article for a month or two. As for some time I also wrote a page review every fortnight, however, I imagine that my total verbiage must have even exceeded the figure I have given.

It has, fortunately for me, long been the practice in weekly papers to publish a middle article as one of its features. The *Nation*, at the time when the *New Statesman* first appeared, normally published three middle articles a week by those brilliant writers, Mr. H. W. Nevinson, Mr. H. N. Brailsford, and Mr. J. A. Hobson. The *New Statesman* at first, I think, had no regular writer of "middles," and Mr. Clifford Sharp asked me one week to try my hand at one. I suggested as a subject "The Decline and Fall of Hell." If I had foreseen what the world was coming to, I might not have been so optimistic on the matter. From that time, I never missed writing for a week except when I was ill, till after the war when I began to have an annual holiday. How many holidays were once darkened for me by the weekly necessity, not so much of finding something to write about, but of wasting sunny hours in writing about it!

In those days, middles as a rule were written in editorial form. The editorial "we" was used, not only for pronouncements on world-politics, but for opinions on such trivial things as buns and beer. This involved a certain twisting of language when one was describing a personal experience. It was obviously impossible to write: "We jumped on to a bus in Piccadilly the other day," or "Our hat was blown off," or "A wasp stung us last Saturday," or even "As we sat in the corner of a third-class carriage on our way to Brighton, a red-nosed man leaned over and pointed out to us that our ticket had fallen on to the floor." It is possible, of course, to get out of the difficulties involved by referring to "the present writer"; but "the present writer" is almost as awkward a customer to handle as the editorial "we."

The editorial "we," however, as it turned out, made it immensely easier—for me—to write middles. It meant that even a middle article was half an editorial, and that the subject had to be arranged and discussed in advance with the editor. The advantage to me was this. I often had to produce a subject suddenly before I had more than the shadowiest idea what I meant to write about it, and, as the editor had a surplus of ideas on everything under the sun, he would at once let his mind begin to play on the subject till, when I left him, sometimes after a vehement argument, I felt that the article was already half-written. This did not mean that I was expected to echo editorial opinions. I was told, indeed, that I could say what I liked so long as I said it objectively. In practice, however, I discovered that the editor and I usually arrived at the same conclusions, though by different routes, and sometimes after prolonged controversy.

Delighted though I was to have my article half-written for me by the editor, the fact remained that it was only half-written. Misery came with the approach to the other half. From an early age, I wanted to write, but I always hated—and still hate—beginning to write. A friend of mine in lodgings had a landlord who confessed to him late one night: "I'm what you might call a reluctant fellow. I'm reluctant to go to bed at night, and I'm reluctant to get up out of bed in the morning." I share the landlord's general reluctance, not least in regard to sitting down to write. I am like a man who wants to go somewhere in his motor car, and whose engine needs cranking up, and who would gladly avoid the effort of cranking up the engine.

Hence, even if I had a week in which to write an article, I should find it difficult to begin writing till the last hours of the last day of the week. Expected to deliver my article by the first post on Thursday morning, I still found myself late on Wednesday night doing my utmost to dodge the necessity of work. How often have I succeeded so well that I have had to set the alarum-clock for six and to go down and compel myself to tackle the detested task on a wintry Thursday morning! This, the young should be warned, though it looks a lazy life, is not an easy life. The reluctant worker has not an hour of the twenty-four free from the shadow of work. He finds himself under the necessity, at some time or other, of working at every hour of the day—if it happens to be the last hour permitted by the printer—writing in such places as railway trains and on washstands in the bedrooms of provincial hotels. The only compensation for such a miserable state of things is that it raises our opinion of human nature by revealing to us the incomparable patience of editors.

Much pleasanter than sitting down to write were the weekly lunches at the Webbs', where the policy of the paper was discussed over mutton and whisky. Mr. Webb always struck me as being the perfect chairman of the board of a paper: an eager propagandist with an enormous mass of knowledge who, while promoting his own policy with every argument in his power, nevertheless always made it clear that the policy of the paper was in the editor's hands. I am afraid I contributed little to those prandial conferences. I knew less about politics and economics than anybody else present. The politics in which I was chiefly interested were Irish politics, and Ireland has never seemed quite as large an island to an Englishman as to an Irishman. It was my interest in Irish politics, by the way, that brought me the only severe editorial rebuke I received during twenty-one years. During the Home Rule controversy, I could scarcely write a middle without dragging in a usually irrelevant reference to Sir Edward Carson. He was, I suppose, my King Charles's head, and he had a way of popping up in the—to others—most exasperating fashion in articles on subjects that had as little to do with him as with the Prime Minister of Kamchaka. At last, after a series of such irrelevances, an exhausted deputy-editor wrote me a letter containing the single sentence: "Can't you forget your b——y country for *one* week?"

It was during the war, I think, that I ceased to use the editorial "we" and began to write over initials. There were scenes which it was easier to describe in the first person singular than in the first person plural—events such as a medical examination of would-not-be recruits by the Army doctors at the White City—and I began to sign articles on personal subjects with the letter "X." This I then lengthened into "X.X.," but as "X.X" had already been appropriated by the manufacturers of stout, I went a letter farther in the alphabet, and transformed the signature into "Y.Y." I have sometimes been asked what it means. The answer is, "Nothing."

As for the history of the *New Statesman* during the last twenty-one years, that is for others to tell. One might write of Clifford Sharp and J. C. Squire and of the union of opposite geniuses that enabled them to raise the *New Statesman* into so high a place in the history of English journalism. One might recall that early colleague who enlisted as a private and was killed in the war, and whose last words to me before leaving were: "I wish to God it was not the Germans but the French we were fighting," so fervently had he loved Germany for years. Then there were the week-end *Statesman* parties at hotels, with Bernard Shaw talking as easily as a thrush sings and as entrancingly, reduced to silence only by sheer horror when, after he had ordered an omelette for lunch, a waiter who had never heard of vegetarianism brought him a ham omelette. . . .

I must stop, however. The printer is waiting as he was waiting twenty-one years ago. The editor is waiting, and even the divine patience of editors must have a limit. I must ring for a taxi—the thousandth taxi or so ordered for the same purpose—to take this into the office. Y. Y.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

These Hurrying Years, an Historical Outline, 1900–1933, by Gerald Heard (Chatto and Windus, 7*s.* 6*d.*), is not only an appropriate book to consider in a number of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION largely devoted to retrospect, but it is a fascinatingly interesting book which I cannot too strongly recommend, a book to read, pencil in hand, scrawling agreements and objections on the margins. From such marks every reader will construct his own footnotes, glosses and corrections. Read in this way, this stimulating book will mean something a little different for every reader, and perhaps it will clarify our minds more where we challenge than where we accept Mr. Heard's judgments. It is natural to lay stress on such points, but these clashes of opinion are as often a measure of the book's excellence as of its limitations. Mr. Heard sets off with a fundamental assumption. On the first page of his introduction he says:

> This our generation is unique. Beside its strange experience, the experience of all other generations is commonplace. . . . Some lived through periods of great achievement: others saw the social order they had thought eternal fail and collapse. But none saw events move so fast that a man in his one lifetime lived through several epochs.

This view of the present as unique has been held for a very long time. It flatters every generation to believe it and it is the stock opening of every propagandist. Mr. Heard harps on it:

> There must come a moment when men come awake to what they are doing and become self-consciously aware why they are doing it. . . . It is of that unprecedented crisis in this transitional animal's extraordinary career that all of us alive to-day are spectators and partakers. We are present at a crisis with which there can only be compared the unknown moment when the ape became man.

This is the violence of the revival meeting, and the flattering belief expressed is not only comparable to the proclamation that to-morrow is the Last Day, and that we shall witness the Second Coming, but the same psychological causes must underlie both. The consciousness of being one of the sheep and a desire that the goats shall be made to recognise it doubtless is one of these. This faith Mr. Heard proclaims again:

> Contemporary art illustrates not only the speed of our age but the result of that speed's acceleration to the present pitch—that we have really broken with the past . . . this break with the past which is without precedent in the whole history of mankind (and which, therefore, it is difficult for us to realise) is clearly evident in the latest works of art.

This view, though it has the support of Professor Read, appears to me to show a misunderstanding of the nature of art itself. It is a common illusion when great works of art first appear. At the time of the first post-impressionist exhibition, the painting of Cézanne and Van Gogh was held to be a complete break with the art of the past. Seen at the Dutch Exhibition, and in the National Gallery, they revealed themselves as logical developments and parts of a tradition without which they could not possibly have painted as they did. And not only is every artist so bound up in the great tradition that he cannot "break with the past," but so is every writer, musician, scientist and philosopher. Civilised man can no more make a complete "break with the past" than he can cut out his gut and nourish himself through his skin. But, no doubt, Mr. Heard will reply that this is possible to us to-day.

* * *

Mr. Heard's historical account embraces the whole world, but he shows it in panoramic perspective: England, and Ireland, are in the foreground, and distant countries are shown from the English point of view; this is the major blemish of the book. In particular, Mr. Heard fails to provide a satisfactory account of Russian history, and altogether neglects Russian influence on English thought. Neither Tolstoy, Tchehov nor Dostoevsky are mentioned. Yet Tolstoy was the biggest moral figure of the first decade; and Dostoevsky's novels, which had great popularity just before and during the war, prepared men's minds to accept Freudian interpretations. Political developments in Russia are also omitted, even those that most profoundly affected England. There is no mention of the Anglo-Russian Entente and partition of Persia, without which preparation it would have been impossible for enlightened Englishmen to accept the Russian autocrat as an ally in a war to make the world safe for democracy. The change in attitude to Russia between 1904 and 1914 was notable. There is no account of the Russian revolutionary movement, of the quarrel between Lenin and Plekhanov, which resulted in the split of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and the importance of the 1905 revolution is never stressed. Had Mr. Heard paid attention to this movement he could not have written: "Lenin was only to get power by accident." Accident comes into all things, but the Bolsheviks showed remarkable political foresight. In 1912 they predicted that they would come into power as a result of a European conflagration which would inevitably follow the Balkan War, which they welcomed for that reason. The episode of Russian history which Mr. Heard treats in detail is Rasputin's influence.

> His career has been given this space because he was a portent. He showed how insane Russia and the world could go under the strain of mechanised slaughter.

But Rasputin is an eternal figure who has recurred not only in Russian history, but wherever that sort of Holy Man has dominated the imagination of a tyrant. There have been Rasputins in India. Of the Tsar and Tsarina, Mr. Heard says:

> The small couple whose petty suites decorated with pale-blue beribboned cushions, framed menu-cards, photos of the dear children, knick-knacks and what-nots are pathetic witnesses how mentally unprotected and immature they were to face the elemental storms around them.

This is the argument of those who see in negro sculpture and surréalist painting proofs of atavistic barbarism or childishness. There is little doubt that Bismark, Darwin and Marx would have preferred the decorations of Tsarskoe Selo to a room built by Corbusier and decorated by Max Ernst.

* * *

On a few points Mr. Heard makes mistakes, or gives a wrong impression. Lord Milner was not "half-German in stock," though he was born in Germany. Conrad's debut as a short-story writer was made in 1897 with *Tales of Unrest*, and not in 1908 with *A Set of Six*. It is true that in 1900–1910 "there were many hearers for Ibsen, now also being translated," but they had been listening for some time, Edmund Gosse's first study of Ibsen having appeared in 1872, and William Archer having published his translation of the plays in 1890. Many persons will not agree that the effect of the war on poetry was "muting," or that "rhyme sank into the hands of those who stayed at home—part of propaganda." There were dozens of soldier-poets of whom Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen and Edward Thomas deserve mention and, though Mr. Eliot stayed in Highgate, *Prufrock* is hardly part of propaganda. Perhaps here is the place to grumble that there is no mention whatever of that uniquely English figure the conscientious objector, whose existence, unimportant during the war, considerably influenced the minds of soldiers who had taken part in it and were turning to pacifism.

* * *

Being an Irishman, Mr. Heard finds it hard to be patient with the English.

> (The Conservatives) must, therefore, in their turn yield to the complete realist, who will use any cunning and violence to achieve his ends. The future has as little place for that compromise, the gentleman, as it has for the later makeshift, the sentimental humanitarian.

Yet, on the next page, he complains that "since 1900 specialisation has grown to an almost insane degree." He should have reminded himself that the extremists among animals who over-specialise, like the sabre-tooth tiger, tend to die out while the present still holds a place for that gentlemanly

compromise, the domestic cat, which can lap up its cream or go off and support itself by hunting in the woods whenever it likes. It is as an Irishman that Mr. Heard writes: "The Day of the Dictatorships, held in power by armed minorities, was from the Ulster Rising already conceived in the womb of Time," and proceeds to refer to Mussolini as a child of Bonar Law. It is possible that thinking of Caesar, Mussolini forgot Carson. Yet, however one may carp, Mr. Heard's book has the tremendous value of clearly bringing out the implications of the vast changes and discoveries made in the last thirty years. The account of the war is admirable, and of what followed it better still. The sketches of Sinn Fein and of Gandhi are masterly, but it is in such a reflection as this on Henry Ford that Mr. Heard shows his deepest insight:

> Planning, we begin to see, is not much use unless we first know the nature of the animal for which we plan. To design a perfect termitary and then put a swarm of bees into it would be a hopeless waste of ingenuity. They would have to desert it or completely spoil it as a termitary before they would yield honey.

If Mr. Heard could drive no more than that idea into men's heads, he would have performed perhaps the greatest possible service to mankind.

DAVID GARNETT

NEW NOVELS

Shame the Devil. By LIAM O'FLAHERTY. *Grayson.* 10s. 6d.
Anitra's Dance. By FANNIE HURST. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.
The Undiscovered Country. By STEPHEN MCKENNA. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.
The Noblest Prospect. By MICHAEL MURRAY. *Duckworth.* 7s. 6d.
Swallows. By ELIZABETH MONTGOMERY. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

The first volume in this batch is an autobiography; and I have included it among new novels not because I mean to convey the smallest doubt of the strictly historical character of Mr. Liam O'Flaherty's recollections but because, being the work of a distinguished modern novelist, his book throws an extremely interesting light on a problem that has puzzled many critics. How far can we tell the truth about ourselves? How far is it possible to gain a dispassionate and objective view of our own personality and of the events to which that personality has given rise? We are fond of remarking that every human creature has in him the material of at least one good book; but were the average man or woman removed from his or her ordinary avocations and pensioned off to write a detailed and unexpurgated life-story, the result would doubtless be so derivative—such a rag-bag of stock-phrases, stock-sentiments and stock-situations—that we might ask ourselves if the author had ever really lived at all, since his or her experience of life appeared to have been drawn straight from popular fiction or from the pages of the yellower Sunday press.

A novelist is a man trained to tell the truth. He is trained, that is to say, to distinguish between emotions he has genuinely experienced—observations he himself has genuinely made—and the ready-made concepts forced on him at every stage of his existence by the society in which he has been brought up. Like the poet, he must see the world with an innocent eye. . . . Of Mr. Liam O'Flaherty's novels and stories, I have often thought that they revealed a very unusual capacity for direct and searching observation. When he writes of fictitious personages, Mr. O'Flaherty is vivid, caustic and original; and it is only when he comes to write of himself and of his own emotions that his grasp of his subject-matter grows slack, rhetorical and unconvincing. In spite of his somewhat noisily expressed resolve to tell us the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and of the painstaking realism with which he flagellates certain personal vagaries, his book produces the impression not so much of an artist exploring the mysteries of his own conduct as of a literary showman raising the curtain on the stage of a brightly illuminated toy-theatre.

In this theatre, Mr. O'Flaherty plays a boisterous rôle. He is the Wild Irishman, the Irresponsible but Gifted Celt; he is also the Tormented Man of Genius. In *Shame the Devil* he tells us how, pursued by furies which had risen up against him from the depths of a stormy Celtic temperament, he fled from London to Paris, where he lost his typewriter in a taxi-cab, lost his money—or a great deal of it—at the races at Saint Cloud, and thence decamped for a Breton seaport: an itinerary which he interrupts by numerous very long, and often excessively boring, tirades and digressions on art, literature, politics and the murkier and more melodramatic passages of his adventurous early life. The material is fresh and interesting, but the treatment is dull. Not for a moment can Mr. O'Flaherty see himself with the cold, objective and unimpassioned eye of a third person. He storms, he blusters; he attacks himself, scarifies his own weaknesses, and yet through it all runs the suspicion that he is playing a not entirely unsympathetic or uncongenial part.

Mr. O'Flaherty is acutely conscious of being an artist; and the Artist (with a capital A) for whose artistic integrity the forces of Mammon are perpetually lying in wait is apt to become, as dear Harriette Wilson would have phrased it, "a dead bore." Genius unalloyed is a heavy lump; and perhaps that is why so many successful novelists, headed by Miss Margaret Kennedy, have attempted to popularise a slightly more full-blooded and Rabelaisian view of the artistic temperament than has hitherto obtained. Miss Hurst follows in the footsteps of Miss Kennedy; The Constant Nymph, it is true, would have had little to say to Miss Hurst's sophisticated and rusée American heroine; yet both young women lived in the shadow of a musical genius and had been reared in a household which was ruled over by a large, prolific, sensual, richly endowed father-of-the-tribe who sired children and thumped a key-board with equal gusto. Bruno's musical achievement is very important; and unfortunately it is just that side of Miss Hurst's novel in which it is most difficult to believe. Anitra is real and charming by comparison; after submitting to the equivocal, but oddly unexacting, patronage of an Italian-born millionaire, saddled with a lunatic wife, who worshipped the father and adored the daughter, Anitra fell in love with a brilliant young European pianist who went by the name of Strakosh, decided to give up Strakosh—because the millionaire's wife had met an unexpected death—and then expired—of a hæmorrhage, which stained the pillow beside her paling cheek a romantic poppy-red, but which was not copious enough to be disgusting—just as Bruno crashed through to the end of his Symphony.

It is among minor characters that Miss Hurst is at her best. Why, one asks oneself, must she seek to unravel the processes of a great composer—an unremunerative and ungrateful pursuit—when she can write so acutely, clearly and economically of ordinary men and women? The groundwork of the picture is extremely plausible; but the great Bruno, I am afraid, like the great Sanger, is little more than a Romantic dummy. Mr. McKenna acknowledges his limitations; like Mr. O'Flaherty, though it is through the medium of a fictitious narrative, he confronts the problem of how far any human being, given honesty and intelligence, can tell the truth about his or her personal life. Lady Bedlington, his protagonist, came of a family of good-looking sisters, all of whom had "married well." In the prologue, she is represented as undergoing an operation, and, during the short period of unconsciousness that supervened, we are asked to imagine that she relived her entire life. From Lady Bedlington's tragedy—conventional parents who warned off the penniless young man with whom she fell in love; a passionate, but subsequently unfaithful, husband to whom she did not respond; a belated intrigue; children to whom she attempted to give the kind of freedom that she herself had been denied—Mr. McKenna has built up a leisurely, voluminous novel, readable and "well-constructed" in a somewhat old-fashioned and unambitious way.

Mr. Murray and Miss Montgomery are tarter and briefer. "The noblest prospect," according to Dr. Johnson, "which a Scotsman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England"; and Mr. Michael Murray—a pseudonym, the dust-cover informs us, concealing the identity of "a well-known young Scottish author and journalist"—unfolds the story of a raw Edinburgh student who wins more than two hundred pounds on a horse-race, travels to London, experiences a large variety of picturesque but uncomfortable changes of fortune, and again escapes from London, destined this time for Paris, after winning a further seven hundred pounds. While *The Noblest Prospect* is a lively, crowded—but not over-crowded—picaresque novel, which at its most effective has something of the quality of an eighteenth-century satirical engraving, *Swallows* is a savage little vignette, executed with unusual neatness, in the fashionable pseudo-Victorian manner. The Swallows, it must be explained, were a parsonic family; Wilhelmina, who came from Scotland, was the clergyman's wife, and it is largely through her eyes that Miss Montgomery has depicted that delightfully drawn humbug, Edward Swallow, who, in his more ingratiating moods, approached his

wife on tiptoe, because " he had an idea that tiptoeing was pleasant to women." The style of the narrative is precise and elegant; the atmosphere that it produces faintly unreal. But Edward Swallow, deftly portrayed by the feline authoress, is a horrid symbol of masculine hypocrisy. PETER QUENNELL

ONE WAY OF ESCAPE

Earth Memories. By LLEWELYN POWYS. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.

Now that the revolutionaries and the reactionaries are at each others' throats, the simple but cunning individualist can slip round the corner and live his own life. That is what Mr. Powys does. He doesn't care a damn for economics, and that is very refreshing in a world torn between the bankers, the industrialists, and the Marxists.

What has enabled him to escape from the mêlée? I think that, like W. H. Hudson, he has been assisted by disease. Had Hudson not been handicapped by a rheumatic heart, he might not have found the moral courage to lead his solitary life. Mr. Powys was stricken in his youth by lung-trouble. The first essay in this book is one of the most poignant and terrifying descriptions of the effect of that disease on a man's imagination and ambitions. He hung on to life like a frightened child clinging to its mother.

> So nervous was I, lest I should have another hæmorrhage, that for months whenever I was dressed and moving about I would unconsciously be pressing my fingers against the right side of my chest, in an absurd endeavour to hold my damaged lung together as one might some precious fragile vessel. I wore a circular hole in a good serge waistcoat by this trick.

He has never escaped that menace. But such is the ingenuity of human nature that he has converted the menace into a weapon to keep the modern social world at bay, to develop his own personality, and to build a philosophy upon it. He has thus made his sickness provide its own antidote; and no doubt that is why he is still master of the situation, a brave example of the triumph of mind over matter.

His philosophy is no new one. Richard Jefferies, who also suffered from the same disease, built up a similar doctrine of sensual-nervous idealism whose intellectual ballast was supplied by Epicurus, with perhaps a smaller borrowing from Zeno. Mr. Powys has grafted on to that a still more modern form of impersonal Stoicism, a half-Oriental scientific joy in the ephemerality of the individual and the static.

> " There is no rock of ages," he says. " Where for summers grass grew, there is now wheat, and where the sheep were folded, docks. Between our cradle and our grave time is no longer than a rook-boy's whistle, and yet long enough to recognise this process of passing, passing, passing."

It is inevitable that this philosophy, a direct outcome of his feeling of insecurity in life, should lead to a policy of " make hay while the sun shines," and that this policy should accord easily with senses hyper-stimulated by tubercule. Through his work Mr. Powys preaches what he calls " natural happiness," a direct relationship of feeling between the instincts, the body, and the earth.

> No message comes through our senses but is full of worship—the taste of brown bread and red wine, the smell of a field of dazzling charlock, the sight of swallows sweeping back and forth over the tilted roof of a barn, the cool fair flesh of a young girl's body, the liquid song of a blackbird in the white twilight of the longest day.

Do we not recognise the voice of another immortal consumptive, John Keats? And do we not realise that it is also the voice of youth, that time of life when the senses are most buoyant, and most prone to attack by the fell disease?

But Mr. Powys is not content to remain so insouciant. He has found that this position must be bolstered up with an ethical backing, and in this effort he has put himself amongst those peculiar seers who through the ages have always haled human society back to its roots in individual happiness. Such people have always been opposed to the politician, the lawyer, the magnate. They have always been wilderness-men, feeding on locusts and wild honey, segregating themselves for periods of forty days, upsetting the moral and social conventions by supping with harlots, " hopping with sparrows on the gravel," loathing the mob, and mocking at worldly hopes. These people, the most

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intense lovers of life, seem to see it the more clearly because they are always on their way to the grave, always standing in the shadow of their own crucifixion. Their detachment is both an accusation and an inspiration, and from a source in their vitality that is perhaps pathological we accept direction towards a saner and healthier mode of life.

> Nothing is more lamentable than to see the number of lives sacrificed, utterly wasted, in the Western world to-day—each worker with his own petty preoccupation walking forward to the grave as though drugged. Our education is directed towards this end. We must learn how to be successful; he whose coffers are most full is most highly extolled. Education worthy of the name should have but one purpose—to teach us how to live the fullest possible lives in whatever state it should have pleased God to call us, whether in a counting-house, or in the common market-place, or in a gaol. Always we should be taught to be conscious, and more conscious, to be accessible to ideas, to be receptive to sense impressions. We should be taught to be expert in love-making. We should come from our schools fortified against mischance, knowing that nothing matters as long as we remain healthy and alive.

What it all amounts to is that we should live dangerously, as Mr. Powys willy-nilly has had to live. In this nervous condition of life, as though for ever at a moment of crisis, of parting, his heightened senses have seized on the significance of the scene, and what he records is always intensified by this agony of uncertainty, of joy, of fear, so that:

> without warning, without reason, we find ourselves suddenly able to experience emotions roaming and marginal, to see life with the eye of Merlin.

And he grows to worship this heightened receptivity, believing, as he gives us picture after picture of Keats-like beauty, that truth also lurks therein. As he says:

> The truth resides in matter's proud processions as they are revealed to our uncertain senses. In what can be seen, in what can be heard, in what can be touched, tasted and felt, there is no treason.

That is one way of escape from the burden that society loads upon our backs; we poor, healthy, adult taxpayers.

RICHARD CHURCH

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A POPULAR JUDGE

Mr. Justice McCardie. By GEORGE POLLOCK. *John Lane.* 15s.

Mr. Justice McCardie was no doubt a great and good man. He helped prisoners out of his own pocket and gave Solomon judgments after interviewing children on his knee in his private room. He had at all times the courage of his opinions and vindicated the right of a bachelor judge to discuss not only matrimonial problems but even female underclothing on the bench. It seems likely that but for his untimely death he might have succeeded the first Lord Birkenhead as President of the Divorce Law Reform Union. He was also an industrious and erudite student of English case law and of the works of Horace. His curiosity even ranged as far as my own! Yet some of his admirers (of whom I am one) may deprecate his opinions being quoted almost like biblical texts so that to obtain a logical *dictum* on any one point is rather like studying the gospels in order to obtain a consistently logical doctrine of divorce—a favourite jig-saw puzzle of some divorce law reformers. Thus in regard to the criminal law he thought not unreasonably that imprisonment did no man any good, yet he was rebuked shortly before his death by the Court of Criminal Appeal for sentencing a man to four years penal servitude and he consistently denounced short sentences. On the other hand, he believed in flogging as a deterrent and that "the sentence of death by the scaffold is the most powerful deterrent that has been or can be known." Yet surely the combination of flogging with hanging or even with burning at the stake or disembowelling in the old style would be even more deterrent. The fact is that intensive study of case law may produce a state of mind which accounts for a favourite observation of Mr. Belloc's that "Protestants think in paving-stones."

His *dicta* on the divorce law of England show the same defect, as (for instance) in a judgment: "The doctrine of recrimination which still stands in the way of this husband being granted a decree does not seem to have rested on any principle of morality or public policy." The doctrine in question, however, does repose on the Canon Law theory of marriage, which is that spouses should if possible cohabit and not be permanently separated, and that if each has been guilty of adultery, neither should claim the right of separation. This is a perfectly defensible principle of morality, though it does not fit into English law, which contemplates divorce as a remedy and separation as a benefit. "It is never in the interests of the children that a repugnant or worthless marriage should be permanently maintained." Here we have, for once, a sweeping generalisation which obviously does not cover every case and to many people will seem mischievous.

"I trust the time is not far distant when the repulsive duties of the King's Proctor will be swept away and when the unhappy doctrine of collusion, as it at present exists, will be reduced to a narrower and more reasonable compass. . . . The doctrine is a relic of a deplorable past and the ugly concomitant of a code which is completely out of date." This, like other defects of the divorce law, was attributed to "the dead hand of the old Canon Law."

If the judge had studied the Canon Law as attentively as English case law he would have realised that the Church in seeking to enforce the observance of a vow was opposed to permanent separation, but on the other hand was not concerned with divorce or with collusive attempts to obtain divorce, which was and is entirely outside Canon Law. It is, therefore, clearly absurd to blame the Church for the ridiculous attempt of High Anglican politicians in 1857 to introduce the new wine of divorce into old ecclesiastical bottles. If, on the other hand, the judge wished to attack the doctrine of collusion, the only logical result of the attack was to admit the right of divorce by consent, subject no doubt to the supervision of the Court for the economic protection of wife and/or children. This solution may possibly have dawned upon the judge in moments of private reflection, but it does not appear in his public utterances.

To assume the part of devil's advocate is not disrespectful to the late judge or to his meritorious biographer. In this country great harm is done to "progressive" causes by loose denunciation of ancient institutions which are not only venerated by civilised men but which have also appealed for centuries to fundamental common sense. Moreover, to shirk the question of divorce by consent has prejudiced the whole case for divorce for cruelty and desertion. For these reasons one may regret that Mr. Justice McCardie, like many others, was not in social science as learned and logical as he was in his pleadings.

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The other parts of the volume deal with the judge's unquestionable virtue of clear-headed courage. The story of the judgment in the Amritsar case is a magnificent example of McCardie's qualities as opposed to the time-serving timidity of politicians. The judge was often blamed in regard to the allied problems of abortion and birth control, which he illuminated in a way by facts and figures on the former point which startled many of his contemporaries, including myself. His individualist revolt against collective tyranny bore very good fruit in his remarks about the British Medical Association. His protest against the illegal and tyrannical action of the National Government in respect of the judges' salaries was well worth recording.

His researches into legal history are interesting, but of necessity a little parochial in outlook, without the historical perspective of jurists like Pollock or Maine or Maitland and devoid of literary form. His biographer might do well to improve the paragraphing of the text and to correct the final misquotation of Landor.

E. S. P. HAYNES

THE DON COSSACKS

And Quiet Flows the Don. By MICHAEL SHOLOKHOV. Translated by STEPHEN GARRY. *Putnam.* 7s. 6d.

The subject of this immense novel is the history of the Don Cossacks from before the Great War up till the final Russian Revolution and civil war.

In a vivid series of close-ups, comparable to the procession of shots in a cinematograph news reel, the reader is shown Cossacks farming, fishing, hunting, lusting, and Cossack women loving, committing suicide, giving birth to babies inside galloping wagons. Later we are shown Cossacks being herded off to the war, disembowelling their enemies and raping women; later again—the Cossacks in revolt, the Cossacks splitting up into revolutionary detachments, and counter revolutionary detachments; we are taken through the endless trailing this way and that way of the various divisions with their machine guns and other regimental properties, and we hear the Cossacks arguing unendingly about politics, both in committees and outside committees.

The portrait of this ferocious and primitive people is painted for the reader in broad outlines, as in a cartoon; a people for whom the instinctual urges are the only things that count. When thwarted in any way by circumstance, the Cossacks, like maddened animals, seem to have but one reaction; they thrash the nearest person to a pulp, and dance on him in their Cossack boots till he becomes a mashed jelly, by way of relieving their feelings. There are in the book one or two heroes, and some characters who think, but they are in a small minority indeed amidst the seething crowd of the others. In fact, the novel's finishing paragraph sums up the whole subject of the book in a symbol: practically all the characters in the novel having been slaughtered at length during the endless fighting, the last grave is described—a mound on the steppe, with a shrine erected over it. . . "Later on, in June, two bustards fought around the shrine. They beat out a little bare patch in the wormwood, crushing the green flood of ripening speargrass, fighting for the female, for the right to life, for love and fertility. And again, after a little while under the mound . . . a female bustard laid nine speckled smoky blue eggs and sat on them, warming them with her body, protecting them with her glossy wings." In this book we are shown the fight of the bustards. Of the speckled eggs finally laid in the nest, the author does not speak here.

The book is divided into a procession of short scenelets, and at the end of each of the scenelets one can be sure of having learnt something interesting from the historical point of view about the Don Cossacks. When Sholokhov's people meet each other—say in the forest, during the woodcutting—we know beforehand that we shall be shown just enough and no more of the characters and their conversation to cover the ground for that day's history lesson, so to speak.

In the early part of the book, when peace time is described, this feeling is not so present; in painting the home lives of the Cossacks there is much more variety. But when the fighting starts, the conversation between the men is entirely politics. As soon as they meet it is "Why did you not come to the meeting yesterday? We have decided to send delegates from the village to Kamenska. There is to be a congress of front line men there on January 23rd." And so on and so on. Much of the writing is brilliant, perhaps especially so in the descriptions of the moods of nature, the country, the weather through which the characters are perpetually moving. An example of his clear objective style is the following: "At the hill top the wind was stronger and the air keener. The Cossacks were silent. Ivan Alexievitch wrapped his face in the collar of his sheepskin. They drew near to a wood through which the road pierced to emerge on to a mounded ridge. The wind rippled in the streams through the wood . . . a magpie chattered in the distance, and it fluttered across the road. The wind was carrying it out of its course, and it flew violently, lopsidedly, its pied feathers ruffling." Something machine made and photographic in the conception of the whole prevents it from being a great creative work, in spite of the brilliant writing, for the book lacks the personal vision which one looks to find in a work of fiction, and remains in essence a super-competent history lesson.

JULIA STRACHEY

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March 13, 1934

UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

Memoirs of the Unemployed. Introduced and Edited by H. L. BEALES and R. S. LAMBERT. *Gollancz.* 5s.

This book is not pleasant reading. It is the most depressing, the most humiliating, book I have read for years. It makes me hate myself for being partly responsible for the suffering it relates; and it makes me wonder how those of us who are not unemployed can allow it to go on. How the unemployed put up with it is easier to understand; for being long out of a job takes the heart out of most people, and a man who has barely enough to exist on, and has to go humbly petitioning even for that, is the most helpless of beings. How we comfortable ones stand it is the unpleasant miracle—presumably because we simply fail to realise what it is like.

It is not, except indirectly, the sheer physical privation that is the worst thing about unemployment. That fact stands out very plainly in these authentic memoirs of unemployed persons, related by themselves with the barest minimum of editing. What is most beastly and destroying is the sense of entire uselessness and futility, of being not wanted and never likely to be wanted again. Of course, that feeling of futility is made a hundred times

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worse when a man has not enough to eat, when he has to sacrifice all his accustomed pleasures, when he keeps away from friends and acquaintances for fear of facing them, and nurses his unhappiness somewhere by himself. Again and again, that sticks out of these terrible memoirs. You get the sense of the unemployed man as a man without hope, and with endless time to churn his hopelessness round in his mind, doing it all the time on a half-empty stomach. Or, even when he is better off than some, and does get enough to eat, very likely he has an ailing wife or child for whom he cannot afford proper attention, and every time he goes into his home—such as it is—he feels their condition as a stigma upon himself.

The editors of this book have not made the mistake of gathering together the records only of the "deserving" unemployed. They do seem to have made a real effort to get a fair sample of the most varied types of people—from business men who have come down in the world, through all manner of skilled and unskilled workers, to an ex-craftsman who has found an escape by becoming a professional burglar. There are hopeful people and hopeless people; and the hopeful ones are apt to be the most depressing of all, because there seems usually so scant a basis for their hope.

Not, of course, that these vivid memoirs can be taken as typical of the entire number of the unemployed. As the statisticians are fond of reminding us, a high proportion of those who are out of work at any time have only been out continuously for a brief spell, and have had far longer periods of employment than of unemployment even during the depression. They are hardly represented in this collection, which presents a picture of the chronically unemployed, or at any rate of those who have experienced prolonged unemployment. But there is not much comfort in that; for there are fully enough of the latter type to stir the conscience of any decent-minded person who once screws himself up to the unpleasant realisation of what their existence is like.

This book ought to bring that home to anyone who is capable of having it brought home at all. For here is a pitiful record of waste and destruction of decent people who might be serving the world and themselves if you and I gave them half a chance. I cannot read this book and believe that it is beyond our power to give them that chance, if we have the will. It is simply not common sense to suppose that it can be inevitable that good workmen at the height of their powers are to be condemned to perpetual idleness, to be driven by misery and dyspepsia to quarrelling with their wives and families, to be reduced to asking themselves, day after day, with increasing certainty as to the answer, the question whether life is worth living. I know we can say that, even under the Means Test, we pay out more to the unemployed than most other countries. But how far short even that falls of the minimum of decent living. And, when we give them bread, we fail wretchedly to give them hope for the future or the chance of ordinary pride and self-respect. This is a wretched book; but I am glad I read it. G. D. H. COLE

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IVAN BUNIN

The Village. By IVAN BUNIN. *Secker.* 7*s.* 6*d.* Reprinted.
Fifteen Tales. By IVAN BUNIN. *Secker.* 7*s.* 6*d.* Reprinted.
The Gentleman from San Francisco, and other stories. *Hogarth Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.* Reprinted.

Last year *The Well of Days*, the first volume of Ivan Bunin's autobiographical novel, appeared in English in celebration of the Nobel award. It was easy to admire Bunin's sensibility to atmosphere and his brilliant re-creation of the old Russian scene; yet I think most readers dropped the book with relief. Why is it that *The Well of Days* is so dreary? Perhaps the finer flavour of Bunin's art, his allocation of subtle values to sounds, shapes and light effects, is lost in translation; or can it be that he is not really happy as a novelist? The new reprints of *Fifteen Tales*, *The Village* and the Hogarth Press volume of stories may help to answer this question.

As for translation, the difference between the authorised and Hogarth Press versions of *The Gentleman from San Francisco* is startling. In each "The Gentleman" emerges as a great story, but Mr. Guerney's halting American misses half the atmosphere and all the gusto of the D. H. Lawrence-Koteliansky translation. This gusto may be D. H. Lawrence's own; it is obvious that he took liberties with his material, particularly in tempo (Bunin, who drew nourishment from stagnation and death, was no poet of movement, so the pace of Lawrence's prose is probably an inspired kind of treachery); but in atmosphere and gradation of tone the D. H. Lawrence is no less superior. The Woolf-Koteliansky renderings of the other stories in the Hogarth volume are good, but they do not read like originals. It seems that Bunin can only be fitly translated when an extraordinary concurrence of stars takes place.

As a novel, *The Village* is more readable than *The Well of Days*, chiefly because it is not autobiographical. Few autobiographers have the uncanny detachment of a Proust; some vagueness, some tiresome sentiment, usually intervenes between the author and the psychic bones of his experience.

> Between the idea
> And the reality
> Between the motion
> And the act
> Falls the shadow

for Bunin as for many writers of his epoch. In *The Village* the navel-cord has been cut; the descriptions of Russian country life have a sharp tang of reality, while those in *The Well of Days* are fogged over with subjective melancholy. The characters in *The Village* are separate but rudimentary. Eternally bored, they transfer their malady to the reader. Chained to a wheel of stagnation they drink and soliloquise, blame fate and Russia and even themselves, but never move an inch from their fixed psychic circle. There is no particular reason why Tikhon Ilitch should have married off "the bride," his mistress whom he had ruined, to a worthless brute: it just happens. It is *The Cherry Orchard* or *Heartbreak House* over again, only nothing breaks the charmed circle; no axe threatens the cherry trees, they simply rot. It is really a weakness in Bunin that he fobs off his spiritual indecisions on the Russian people. There are defeatists outside Russia; there are spendthrifts outside Russia; there is aimless cruelty outside Russia. Either people are individuals or they are nothing. Pattern might have saved *The Village*, but the pattern is as rudimentary as the characters. It follows that the novel, with its crying need of some development through change in the characters or in the arrangement of events, is not Bunin's medium.

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The only change which really stirs him is death. *The Village* is a long much-ado about running to seed; in *The Well of Days* the altar-piece is a funeral and the most vivid picture shows the dead body of the mare Kabardinka being eaten by dogs. Death is also the hero of eleven out of the *Fifteen Tales*. In *The Gentleman from San Francisco* he comes and "with a little pin" bores through the paraphernalia of wealth, its cocktails, its servants and its clothes. Power is powerless before him; the millionaire becomes merely a dead body to be got out of the way as quietly as possible lest it should disturb the amenities of the hotel. "Light Breathing" is a story told in the churchyard; "Son" describes a curious love affair which ends in a suicide pact; "Aglaia" is a young girl who is hounded out of life by the power-lust of a priest. In these tales it is clear that Bunin has come into his own. Endless musings about death are a bore; death is not. In the short story there is no need for much development and pages of description are obviously barred. Simple or atmospheric characters suffice, and an "atmosphere" attaching to a set of events is exactly what is needed. Within these narrow limits Bunin never repeats himself; he is almost as far as is Tchehov from the primitive type of story in which repetition of typical adventures is the only attraction, the kind of stories proper to children and to people without a written literature. He is least successful with the eastern tales in this collection, and with "A Goodly Life," which is the autobiography of an unsympathetic character, but in the rest of his Russian stories, as in "Son" and *The Gentleman from San Francisco*, he makes Tchehov seem by comparison dim, shadowy, and fin-de-siècle. (Look, by the way, at the description of moonlight in *The Well of Days*: here is the real thing, whereas Tchehov's stories seem always to take place in purely literary moonlight like Daudet's or like the nowhere of Saint-Saëns' music.) Bunin, of course, cannot manipulate character as Tchehov does; his understanding of people is limited, and above all he lacks the essential oil of humour. In his clarity, his sobriety, and particularly in his anger, he is more modern than Tchehov. It is a revolutionary anger, although towards the Revolution itself his attitude appears to be negative. Bunin challenges the daylight, writing with strength as well as sensibility. If we rejoice only in the more objective short stories, and forget the labours which resulted in the novels, the self-absorbed defeatism which Bunin shares with a dying tradition is to blame.

OLGA MARTIN

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The Saga of the Faroe Islanders. Translated by MURIEL A. C. PRESS. *Dent.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

The ancient Danes and Scandinavians were not a poetical people, judged by modern standards. The language of their skalds and story-tellers was naked, bleak, and steely. There is all the difference in the world between their creations and such things as the Welsh *Mabinogion* and the ancient Irish literature. This *Saga of the Faroe Islanders* translated so effectively by Muriel A. C. Press makes that very clear. Though infinitely suggestive, it is undecorated, for the narrator is entirely concerned with the naked story. The reader is left very much to his own powers of visualising, the narrator intruding his personality as little as in the ballad, and his imagination even less. The sea thunders and bellows, the dragon prows of the Vikings cut through the surf, shields and swords glitter in the sun; but there is practically no embellishment or story-teller's descriptive analysis. Nevertheless, the mind is quite transported; one can hear and see everything as if one were there, though very few of the passages are as florid as this:

> Ozsur had thirty men with him in the place, and the defences were hard to take. Ozsur had a son called Leif, who was then a young child. Then Sigmund's men attacked and those inside defended themselves. Sigmund went up to the place and looked round. He was dressed with a helmet on his head, a sword girt on his thigh, and an axe in his hand, all bound with silver and with sharp points, the best of weapons, with a bound shaft. He was in a red kyrtel, and his byrnie was outside it. And it was the saying of friend and foe that never had such a man as he come to the Faroes.

Nearly the whole saga from beginning to end is marvellous, though entirely unconscious of itself as art. But why is it so arresting? Because, I suppose, it is only occupied with fundamental human realities, and faithfully narrates the deeds of a people who, though ferocious and pagan, were stupendously brave and often strangely noble. Even the liars and cowards of the scene sometimes stir us to admiration. It is no wonder that William Morris fell completely under their spell, and it is more than understandable why the Germans to-day in their bewilderment and disillusion have turned a worshipping gaze upon this ancient world.

Of the existing sagas this *Saga of the Faroe Islanders*, though one of the latest, is one of the very best; it is to be found in the great *Flat Island Book* MS., which was put together between 1387 and 1394. But it existed, of course, much earlier, and though probably first written down in the thirteenth century, the events related belonged to the years 970 to about 1035—just before the Norman Conquest of England. There is an illuminating preface by E. E. Kellett, who is one of the best living authorities on the ancient Scandinavian saga.

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About Motoring

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THE nation is slowly grasping the fact that the pedestrian needs shepherding no less than the motorist. Most of the pedestrians who are killed on the roads every year meet death in the act of crossing. There are obstinate champions of the pedestrian who jealously emphasise his priority rights on the road. Unquestionably the pedestrian preceded all other forms of traffic. The feet of the walker traced out the sinuous tracks which provided these islands with their first communications. Horsemen came later, and trampled out the tracks with more clarity and mud. The wheels of horsedrawn traffic enforced the first widening, and many centuries elapsed before power traffic dictated the immense breadth and magnificent surface of the modern road. So far as priority is concerned, the pedestrian unquestionably claims the first and chief right on all ancient highways. But the fundamental interests of the pedestrian are the real issue, and they necessitate his being banished from all motorways, in so far as it is possible to banish him. He stands to gain everything and to lose nothing by a tolerably complete exclusion from all

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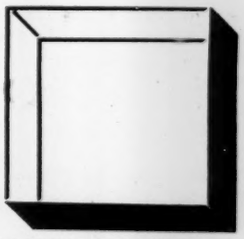

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motorways; and his historic right attaches only to those ancient roads which have been developed from the footpaths of antiquity.

Naturally, by "exclusion" nothing more is meant than relegation to sidewalks, coupled with control of his inevitable crossings; and both limitations would be planned entirely for his own safety. In many places road widening has been executed with brutal callousness by absorbing ancient sidewalks in the carriageway. The pedestrian is thus forced to tramp along the tarmac. He is often too ignorant to realise that the right-hand side is the safer by day; and as such roads are usually barely wide enough to take two traffic streams, he must squeeze himself into the hedge wherever double traffic is passing. At night neither side is safe, for he is very likely to be hit when two dazzled motorists are passing each other level with his vulnerable body. The pedestrian can experience nothing but constant terror in using such a road, and his historic rights on it are not worth a brass farthing. At whatever cost a separate footpath should be constructed without delay along all such roads. On many of the new arterials his lot is little better, for although millions have been spent on the carriage way, the footpath often consists of a kerb and a devastated strip behind the kerb. Here, too, footways should be built without delay, and the footway should be of three-pedestrian width wherever land is available and cheap.

Turning to the question of road crossings, the pedestrian knows exactly what he wants, and half an hour in the Strand will show the road authorities what ought to be done. The Strand is narrow, as city streets go; but few pedestrians ever dream of crossing it except when its width is bisected by an island. And even at the island refuges most pedestrians choose an island where there is a police control. The crying need of all pedestrians seeking to risk their necks in fast power traffic is a *narrow* crossing. Elderly people are terrified by wide crossings, which further demand the mental adjustment of switching over their vigilance halfway across to cope with traffic approaching at speed from a different direction. Some experts suggest that all wide roads should be centrally split by a continuous safety strip, where pedestrians may take refuge, and pull themselves together before making a second dash. Other authorities advise that wherever or whenever traffic is really thick, pedestrians should be allowed to cross only at certain identified points. A few prophets look still farther ahead, and envisage a day when footways may have to be railed off, and it shall become a legal offence to cross many roads except at stated points, where robot lights or subways or bridges may have to be installed. However that may be, it is courting disaster to set an elderly and probably foolish woman to make a 60ft. or 80ft. dash across any busy highway; 20ft. is quite far enough for any single dash, where the crossing is not controlled.

Naturally, many people have to cross the road at junctions—the Whitehall-Westminster Bridge Road is a familiar example to most of us. We cannot easily reconstruct such ancient junctions in the heart of great cities; but it is idiotic to multiply such dangers when we build new roads. Road engineers have already produced two special devices for such points. One consists of "staggering" the junctions. Under this system all power traffic is confronted by a series of right-angled turns at such junctions, and is thereby compelled to slow right down; coupled with the division of the road into narrow strips by plenty of wide islands, this device is quite effective. The other is the "roundabout" which, coupled with islands to shorten the dash, is also effective. The *width* of the islands is vital. The "blob" type of refuge is decidedly dangerous. Some London streets contain island refuges of this "blob" pattern, consisting of a circle or oval about 6ft. in diameter. At busy hours such blobs become packed with eager crossers, and the opposite pavement is equally packed. A momentary lull occurs in the fast traffic, and a rush is made from both sides simultaneously. Pedestrians collide half-way across the danger strip, and only driving skill prevents an accident. The ideal is a broad strip refuge, a narrow carriage way, and the division of the crossers into two parties, according to the direction in which they are crossing; but it is doubtful whether the use of arrows for this purpose would be obeyed, for pedestrians in their way are quite as undisciplined as motorists. In provincial cities this difficult business is enormously complicated by the kerb-parking of motor cars, and by bus and tram stops. It is obviously perilous for trams to take up and set down at the road centre. It is equally dangerous for bus stops to be located alongside each other on opposite sides of the road; but municipal authorities are so stupid that they persist in permitting such threats to the public safety, and will persist until a central authority intervenes. Unilateral kerb-parking and chessboarded bus stops are reforms which should be enforced without delay; and every existing railed tramway should be superseded as soon as possible, either by trolley buses or by motor buses.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 213

Set by V. Sackville-West

Mr. H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* is fortunately well known as an indispensable adjunct to the writing-table of any man of letters. Nevertheless it may at times have occurred to some one amongst its numerous disciples that this excellent work might have benefited by additional paragraphs in the manner, say, of the paragraph entitled *Pedantic humour*. It would have been both interesting and valuable, for example, had Mr. Fowler included a paragraph headed *Purple passage*, instead of limiting himself to the statement that *Purple makes -lish. -ly*. Competitors therefore should exercise their wits (a phrase of which Mr. Fowler would certainly have disapproved) in contributing one extra paragraph of 500 to 600 words, which, with any luck, might be incorporated in the next edition of the work in question. The style (we hope not inimitable) of Mr. Fowler's civilly disagreeable and demolishing pen should of course be reproduced as closely as possible. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best entries.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Gt. Queen St., W.C.2. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, April 20th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION 211

Set by Frank Sidgwick

In one of the late F. Anstey's *Voces Populi* (though not in the series reprinted under that title) there lives for a glorious minute a Hyde Park reciter, who spouts the following fragment:—

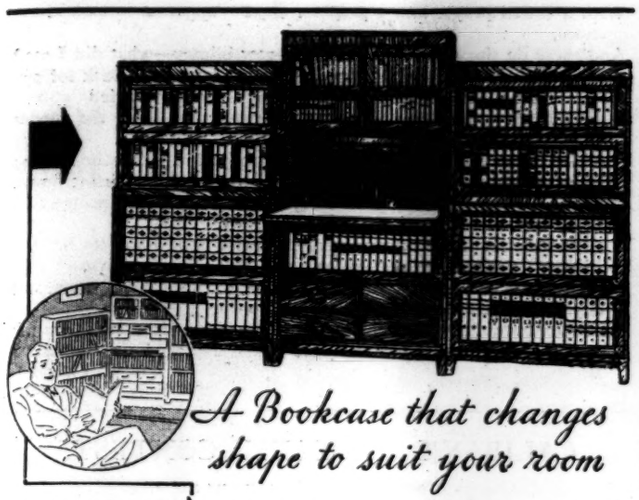
"And on came them maddened 'orses, with their foiery smokin' breath,
As were bearin' the woman I lurved to a crule and 'orrible death!
'Ow could I save my darlin' from layin' a mangled 'eap
On the grorss below where the buttercups blow, along of the innercent sheep?
I felt my brine was a-reelin'—I 'adn't a minnit to lose!
With a stifled prayer, and a gasp for air, I——"

at which point he suddenly becomes aware of an overlooked penny on the grass. . . . We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for continuations of the above, carrying on from the break after "I——" for not more than 12½ new lines. Competitors may either bring the tale to a culmination, or desist with a similar aposiopesis.

Report by Frank Sidgwick

There were, I fear, some small misprints in the form in which the Anstey poem appeared on March 31st, the only important one being in the final aposiopesis, where a "to" had apparently dropped from its brother in the line above. Many of the thirty-one entries seem to have thought it was intentional.

Before the competitors' work reached me, I pondered on the fragment, to determine exactly what I felt were the difficulties confronting a continuator of the half-told tale. I am not certain how far realism and consistency are necessary for a tale of this kind; but I do not think it should carry on, as one competitor made it, in the style of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's "Jubilee Cup." In all the years I have known the poem, I have always pictured it as in a Wild West or Cowboy setting—the traditional locality for Maddened 'Orses in the mass—and I have always seen several hundreds of them. Mustangs, of course, mustangs. Stampeding. Towards a precipice, or cleft in the (?) Rockies, because the word "below" must mean more than merely (and dully) below the 'Orses feet. But then a snag—"buttercups." Is *Ranunculus bulbosus* indigenous in the Woolly West? The scene shifts (in the mind's



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The chief object to which the Society devotes its resources is the education of the people in political, economic and social subjects. To effect this purpose it must in the first place educate itself by the discussion of those problems which from time to time appear ripe for solution. Its members therefore undertake the study of such problems and their conclusions are published, usually in pamphlet form, and by this means made available for the information of all. More than 230 such pamphlets have been issued to date.

The same ends are sought to be attained by means of circulating libraries supplied to Workmen's Clubs, Co-operative Societies, Trade Unions and other bodies; by arranging series of lectures and meetings in the autumn and winter months each year; and by means of a Summer School held yearly during the month of August for members and others. The School this year is to be held at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

The members of the Society who control its policy, are Socialists; but any who are willing to assist are invited to join the Society as associates or to subscribe to the funds without becoming members. Associates are required to subscribe not less than 10*s.* yearly. Subscribers of sums not less than 5*s.* a year will receive FABIAN NEWS, its monthly journal, together with all the publications issued to members.

Full particulars of all the undertakings of the Society are recorded in the Annual Report. This Report, and the other publications of the Society can be obtained of the Secretary, who will be glad to give any other information desired, and to send forms of application for membership or associate membership if requested.

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eye) to some sweet English scene, a Lover's Leap, of which every county provides at least one, not incompatible with buttercups below. Lastly, what maddened the 'Orses? Finally, what is the rhyme to "lose"?

I have now studied thirty-one entries from thirty competitors. The word "mustang" does not appear. In most poems the locality is left indefinite. The precipice, quarry, or cliff turns up all right in several. No one has worried about the buttercups. But . . . many are content with the minimum two horses; and in certain cases My Darlin' is conveyed, not on the bare back of my vision, but in a carriage, a cart, a tandem, a charabanc, even a barouche. And the 'Orses are treated as maddened, apparently, because 'Orses in a poem of this kind are Maddened or nothing. The oddest thing is that two or three competitors have assumed that the man who gasped for air in the poem was the same as the man who suddenly becomes aware of the overlooked penny, and have brought the penny from Hyde Park into the "grorss below"—and excellent poems they have made out of it.

Now first I must eliminate three entries which fail to continue the metre; all, I regret to say, by ladies, one of whom states that she is eighteen. Other competitors are not much better: this "Fireman's Wedding" metre, common as it is, wants a bit of handling. In the first place, it is written in couplets; a sentence should not carry on from one couplet to the next. Secondly, the caesura is tricky: it must leap to the reader's eye; an internal rhyme helps there, but internal rhyme should not be too frequent—Anstey's twice in six lines suffices. (T. E. Casson in twelve lines inserted eleven internal rhymes, four of them disyllabic.) The shortest entry of the lot contained a Cockney gem:—

"But there was a smile on 'er innercent dial as' er 'ead went under the dray."

Scot's entry I shall preserve, not for its merits as verse, for it contains the line:—

"I thank you kindly, mister. 'Wish it 'ad bin 'arf-a-crown,"

but as a specimen of calligraphy. In the second class of the final dozen I place Ekim, James S. Doyle, Issachar, Beggars' Roost, Oliver Lawton, and William Bliss. The six best are W. N. G., A. H. Grant, H. C. M., Southron, Cabomba, and E. W. Fordham, and it has been hard to choose between them. Cabomba solved the puzzles in an unexpected way by making the 'Orses belong to a roundabout, but overran a couplet. H. C. M., in perfectly accomplished verses, put forward the ancient solution that the whole thing was a nightmare. Southron had a line about Daniel and Samson, which seems to me to be out of character for a narrative ballad of this type, but ended with a glorious aposiopesis. E. W. Fordham, triumphantly Ansteian, overran three couplets (though the deletion of two "As"-es and repunctuation would cure two). A. H. Grant drops rapidly out of Cockney and debunks the romance. W. N. G., rather overdoing the phonetic rendering of a Cockney speech that is Shavian rather than Ansteian, really finishes the poem with an incident reminiscent of "Burglar Bill," and must have First Prize. But to be fair, W. N. G. must be content with 1½ Guineas, while two half guineas go to E. W. Fordham and A. H. Grant.

FIRST PRIZE

. . . .I tore with toightened thews
At the floyin' rines in the 'ope to check if but for a moment's breath
The weohls o' that juggernort charrybong in their 'eadlong rice to death;
They 'urled me back, sir, 'elpless, as a infant newly born,
And with foam-flecked jors and never a pors them 'oofs went thunderin' orn;
I 'id my fice in my 'ands; I 'ad done the best that I could,
And my ears was filled with the frantic shouts of the 'orrified multitood;
When 'ark! 'igh up in the 'evings, loike the songs of an ingel band,
Came a vice I 'ad thort to 'ear no more till I reached the Better Land!
'Twas the vice of our long-lorst byby, our dear little Angelar,
Syin': "Stoppit, you norty 'orses, 'oo's fwoightenin' my mammar."
And the 'oliday-makin' 'undreds was 'ushed with a sudden Or. . . .

"W. N. G."

SECOND PRIZES

With a stifled prayer and a gasp for air I says to myself "Now choose
"A death that is worthy of Nelson's sons, or a life of endless shime;
"A life of wealth in ease and 'ealth, or an 'ero's grive and fime."
And the words was 'ardly out of my mouth when I chose the manly part,
And with a toiger spring I lep' in front of that lumberin' cart,
As it lurched and reeled through the 'arvest-field at the edge of the precerpiss;
And my Queen she saw me springin' and blew me a pashernit kiss
As I clawed at the 'orses' norstrils and clung like a wild vampoire
That sucks the blood from the sleeper's throat with a ghoulish mad desoire.
And the steeds they seemed ter quiver, they faltered and stumbled and fell,
My thighs they was smashed as the vehicle crashed—but my lurve was saved from 'ell.
I trust that I speak with modesty—Gawd knows I would not boast,
But the welcome awaitin' an 'ero above, it's that what (*pointing skywards*), deloights me most.

E. W. FORDHAM

With a stifled prayer and a gasp for air, I—'appened to look at my shoes,
And there on the grorss beside them—gaw blimey—what did I see?
A Brown some bloke had dropped there—at larst some luck for me.
So there was a nice dilemmy—what should I do? If I tried
I moight fail to save my girl from the grave, and loose the copper beside.
"A bird in the hand," said the poet, so I stooped to gather the brown;
With a 'orrible crash and gory smash they trampled my darling down.
And now when the days grow longer and I smell the springtime's breath
I sit and dream of my dear one and her most unpleasant death.
I think of 'er silver laughter, of 'er sweet little winning ways,
Of those eyes of blue, of that heart so true, of those 'appily innercent days,
And then I remember that copper, and I smooth out sorrow's frown,
Though a darling girl is a possible pearl, a picked up copper's a Brown.

A. H. GRANT

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 68.—CATECHISM

I asked for answers to the following six questions:

(1) What colour are Muriel's eyes?
(2) What is the cat's name?
(3) How old is George?
(4) Who is Floozie's favourite author?
(5) Where does Dad keep his piccolo?
(6) Is Percy a teetotaler?

The following are the answers I received:

From Muriel: (1) Black, (2) Pooter, (3) 40, (4) Flaubert, (5) In the study, (6) Yes.
From Helen: (1) Green, (2) Mrs. Siddons, (3) 41, (4) Hemingway, (5) In the study, (6) No.
From George: (1) Blue, (2) Tibbles, (3) 43, (4) Hemingway, (5) In the music-room, (6) Yes.
From Floozie: (1) Grey, (2) Pooter, (3) 40, (4) Hemingway, (5) In the drawing-room, (6) No.
From Percy: (1) Grey, (2) Tibbles, (3) 43, (4) Gyp, (5) In the drawing-room, (6) Yes.

Given that each person catechised has answered two questions truthfully and the other four untruthfully, and also that every question has been answered truthfully by one person at least, *what facts can be deduced with certainty?*

PROBLEM 65.

This problem has proved more difficult than I anticipated, though a fair number of correct solutions has reached me since last Saturday.

The wording excludes any simple arithmetical solution. The sums to which the Doctor refers cannot be calculated additively, nor does either £49 and £0, or £625 and £576, constitute a reasonable solution. Either of these is based merely on a "catch," quite out of keeping (in my view) with the character of these problems.

The clue to the solution lies in the introduction, which must have *some* bearing on the rest of the problem. The Doctor believes in economising effort and supports the metric system "provisionally." These facts, together with the remark ". . . I reckon to be £49" should have provided the necessary clues. The Doctor "reckons" on the *duodenary* scale and his £49 is what most of us would call £57. Hence the amounts put by are £121 and £64 in our reckoning, or, in the Doctor's £11 *and* £54.

PROBLEM 66.—HOT CROSS BUNS.

Clearly, Uncle Tom pays out on each bun $(n - 3)d.$, where n is the number of children.

Hence the number of buns $= \frac{116}{n-3}$

and, since this quotient is an integer, n must be 4, 5, 7 or 32.

But the dialogue excludes 4 and 5, while 32 is clearly absurd.

Thus there are 7 children and 29 buns, and the only possible partition of the buns is:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the first sender of a correct solution.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points, a solver is entitled to a prize, consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150.

Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of papar.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

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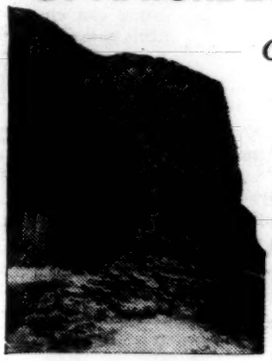

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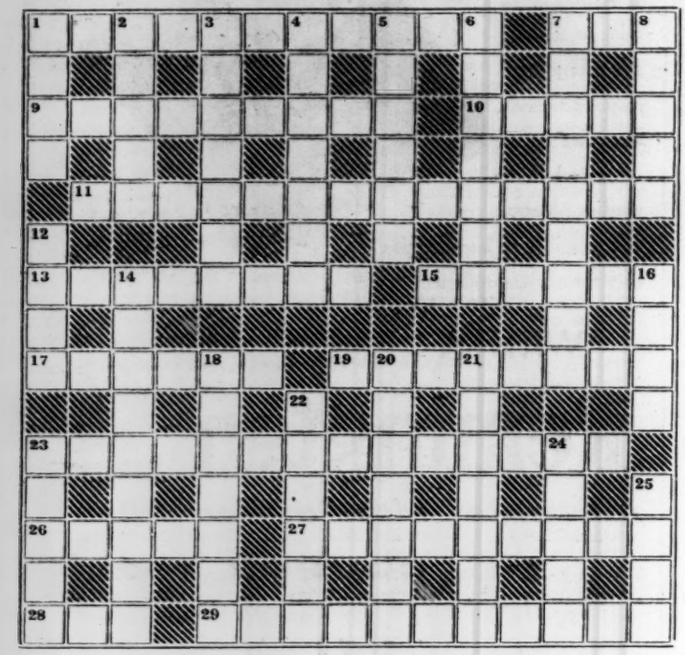
WEEK-END CROSSWORD 214

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Queen Street, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

The winner of last week's crossword is I. M. Christie, Quarazze, Presso Merano, Italy.

ACROSS

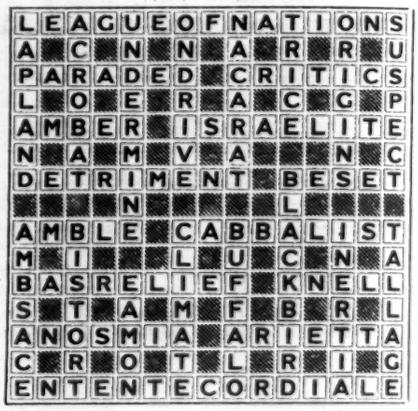
1. Lilliput would have been a suitable home for him.
7. An afternoon for a police officer.
9. He graves the tombstone.
10. Last ceremonies of favourites.
11. = eiderdown headed?
13. Alone he supped.
15. Was confounded by a clairvoyant ass.
17. A prose variation of musical drama.
19. The Duce is out of order with the date wrong.
23. Seasonal visitors.
26. I may change my body for a lover providing I keep my head.
27. The sort of appeal that one is intended to take to heart.
28. A deed improves in quality with this.
29. Guyon found Acrasia on one.

DOWN

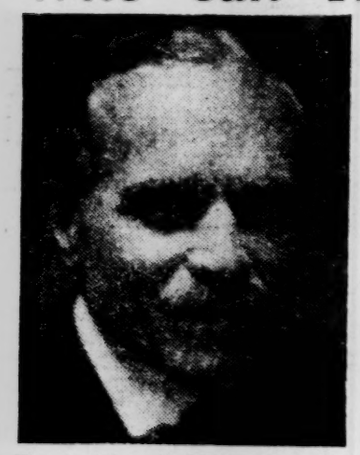
1. Frozen salute.
2. This body might be expected to be more than 4½ points of the law.
3. Otherwise martial.
4. In this scene the actors are still acting.
5. Ceremonially undress.
6. A logical woman.
7. Listen emmet.
8. 2's feet are stuck in the mud.
12. An historical lady.
14. The burglar hopes to get what servants do after meals.
16. Place for discarding footwear is back in fashion.
18. Nigel took refuge here.
20. First-class blood only can engage in this game.
21. He's paid to be paid.
22. Worn out.
23. The beginnings of 23 across are on this footing with mankind.
24. A kind of order.
25. Should be done as a single-handed secret.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

NOTES:—Amble—"The Lady of Shalott"; Knell—*Macbeth, IV*, 3.



Who can Resist this Appeal?



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APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

BEDFORD COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
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The Council of Bedford College invite application for the following posts vacant as from the beginning of the session 1934–5:—

Assistant in the Department of Modern History. Candidates must have an Honours degree in Modern History. Salary, £250, rising to £300. The post is open to men and women equally.

Last date for receiving applications April 21st, 1934. For further particulars apply to the SECRETARY.
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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

THE NEW FUNDING LOAN AND GILT-EDGED PROSPECTS—THE WEST AFRICAN GAMBLE—KAFFIRS AND THE BUDGET

THERE are some professional investors who see in the issue of £150 millions 3 per cent. Funding loan, 1959–69, the end of the gilt-edged boom. The Treasury, they say, has no further interest in bolstering up the gilt-edged market. There are no sizable maturities until 1938, and no important loan can be called until 1940. The floating debt is no longer high enough to call for further funding operations. The Treasury can, therefore, remove its control of new gilt-edged issues and allow the market to go to pieces. Others profess to see in the 3 per cent. Funding loan issue an ungentlemanly attempt on the part of the Treasury to exploit a firm market before Mr. Neville Chamberlain upsets it by refusing to lower income tax. And the Midland Bank is annoyed at the sight of a new Funding loan because the joint stock banks do not want to see the supply of Treasury bills reduced. Indeed, refunding of the floating debt necessitates a further increase in the banks' "investments," which already form an abnormally high proportion of their resources, and constitutes a further potential threat to the gilt-edged market. Mr. Keynes has maintained that there is no need for the Bank of England ever to force the joint stock banks to unload their holdings of gilt-edged securities on the market, but it is pointed out that Mr. Keynes is not the Governor of the Bank. These bearish arguments, fired from different corners, but aimed at the same target, were no doubt responsible for the slight discount on the new 3 per cent. Funding loan when dealings started. The market, however, soon recovered its equilibrium.

* * *

It seems to us absurd to suggest that the Treasury has no further interest in the gilt-edged market. Any Conservative Government is always interested in maintaining its credit. The 3 per cent. Funding loan need only be regarded as an expression of fussiness on the part of the Treasury. There was no obvious call for a refunding operation. The issue of 2½ per cent. Conversion loan last September dealt with Treasury bond maturities, and if £300 millions of the £800 millions Treasury bills outstanding are in the hands of the public departments and the Exchange Equalisation Fund, the floating debt is standing at a very reasonable figure. The outlook for the gilt-edged market depends ultimately upon the rate which first-class borrowers can afford to pay. Immediately, perhaps, it depends upon the Government's public works and loan policy. If the Government were to encourage local authorities to borrow for public works the resulting new issues would unsettle the gilt-edged market in its present sensitive condition. But there is no sign that the Government intends to adopt a new public works policy, and even if it did the Bank of England could offset any reaction in the price of gilt-edged securities by a sensible "open-market" policy. The borrowings of local authorities and public boards in the past three months were the lowest in any first quarter for three years. Even private enterprise made little use of cheaper money in the public market. If the gilt-edged market is to react it will not be able to react very far unless there is to be a change in the basic conditions of the capital market.

* * *

The gamble in West African gold shares is frightening most members of the "House." The demand for shares comes from highly speculative quarters and the market is unable temporarily to satisfy it except at extravagantly high prices. The average prospecting company in West Africa has a capital of under £100,000, and for the privilege of participating in its venture the public will pay anything up to five times the par value of the shares. The properties of the following companies have yet to be proved—and it will require a large expenditure of money to prove them—but the market is valuing them as if they were established dividend-paying concerns :

	Par Value.	January Price.	Present Price.
Atta	2/–	3/10½	10/3
Konongo	2/–	2/3	6/–
Gold Coast Banket ..	2/–	2/4½	5/–
Kwahu	2/–	10/3	57/6
Gold Coast Main Reef..	5/–	3/9	10/3
Tarkwa Banket West ..	1/–	3/4½	6/3

There are good dividend-paying gold companies in West Africa, such as Ashanti, which is reasonably priced, but this wild gambling in the unproved properties is unhealthy and should be stopped. Anyone possessing an undeserved and wicked profit on West African gold shares should cash in immediately and reinvest in the South African market. This particularly applies to "bulls" of Kwahu, a holding company whose equity is priced on the basis of the present market valuations of the development companies in which it holds an interest.

* * *

Mr. Havenga's new budget appears more favourable to South African gold mines than the market at present realises. He has kept to his promise that the special excess profits tax should not exceed £6,000,000 in any one year and has extended this guarantee for three years from March 31st last. Moreover, he estimates the excess profits tax in the current year at £5,000,000, implying that he intends to take less than he could claim under his original promise. The reduction comes about through the change which he has allowed in the determination of the "standard" profit. In future, the "standard" profit will be determined by applying to the tonnage now milled the profit per ton actually earned in November and December, 1932. This makes it unnecessary to give special allowances for reductions in the grade of ore being milled, but provision will be made for fixing a reasonable standard of profit for mines which were not sufficiently developed at the end of 1932. The rate of duty upon profits in excess of the "standard" so determined is still to be fixed by a sliding scale (beginning with 1 per cent. for each penny of excess profit per ton milled), but to avoid the anomalies of the old tax, a new scale has been devised which will "produce a smooth curve of tax liability without regressions." Mr. Havenga actually had to apologise for his leniency by arguing that the Government must "encourage the sinking of capital into industry and avoid creating in the minds of investors the fear of confiscatory taxation." If the Government is to take less from the gold mines this year—to be precise £550,000 less, allowing for the estimated increase of £450,000 in the normal tax—it is in effect making a big concession. Last year the revenue was raised from gold selling at an average of 125*s.* per ounce. To-day's price is around 134*s.* per ounce. And the mines are given a three years' guarantee against any increase in the total tax levy !

* * *

We would again recommend the shares of the Union Corporation group. East Geduld holds a Government lease, under which any taxation imposed in excess of that existing at the date of the lease (3*s.* in the £) may be deducted from the Government's share of the profits. This is, we believe, the most favourable lease of any gold mine on the Rand. Geduld has a third interest in East Geduld, and both have an interest in the adjoining Grootvlei property, which is now being developed. Union Corporation is, of course, interested in all three. At the present market prices the following yields are obtained :

	% Earned.	% Paid.	Price.	Div. Yield. %
Union Corporation 12/6	51.7	48.0	6⅛	5.02
Geduld £1	57.7	56.25	7⅝	7.38
East Geduld £1 ..	37.9	35.0	8⅛	4.31

East Geduld is a developing mine with excellent prospects, and with gold at its present price a further profitable tonnage has become available for Geduld, extending its life to about twenty years.

* * *

Pushing shares through the ether ! Financial services are now so advanced in Canada that investment houses use radio for share-pushing. A series of talks on "Problems of Financial Interest" is being broadcast in Winnipeg, each one ending with this exhortation : "We would like to remind you that this series of talks comes to you through the facilities of ——, who have their main office at Winnipeg and are connected by private wire with their branch offices in Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, etc., etc. Write in or call personally at any of our offices and we shall be only too pleased to give you full details concerning ——Investment Trust, its directors, management and portfolio." This only goes to show that legislative control of stock market speculation on the other side of the Atlantic will meet with practical difficulties.

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COMPANY MEETING.

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY.

Gratifying Increase in New Business.

The 126th annual general meeting of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society was held on Tuesday last at Norwich.

Mr. Michael Falcon (the president) said that the figures submitted told their own tale of progress and prosperity. New business production showed a gratifying increase, the total being £8,933,966, or £924,256 over that for 1932. The improvement was well spread over their numerous branches and testified not merely to the efficiency of their field organisation but also to the growing recognition on the part of the discerning public of the benefits which this old mutual office was so well able to accord.

The average net rate of interest earned by the Society upon its funds over the year worked out at £4 12s. 5d. per cent., a reduction of only 3s. 6d. per cent., as compared with 1932. This gratifying feature arose from the fact that the reduced earning power of money was, broadly speaking, confined to their placements of current income and was negligible in its effect upon the large majority of their invested reserves, the Stock Exchange securities in respect of which remained in the balance-sheet at the values to which they were written down at the close of 1931. The present balance-sheet values constituted a margin of protection which not only encouraged confidence in the future, but fully justified the board in the decision to continue the payment of interim bonuses at the same high rate as those actually allocated at the distribution as on December 31, 1930, and which had been continued in the form of interim bonuses since that date. At December 31 last the funds of the Society amounted to £38,618,919, an advance of £2,011,055 during the year.

In conclusion, the President said he thought that while there were definite indications that general trade at home was improving, yet the low price of primary products made things extremely difficult for this country's overseas customers and debtors. If he might use a homely example, with wheat at 19s. per quarter instead of, say, 30s., which might be regarded as a low average price over a period of years, it meant, in theory, that the country exporting wheat had to sell at least half as much again to balance its former amount of corresponding imports. Though it might appear that this state of affairs should help to feed our enormous population, it was difficult to conceive, while these conditions continue, how our customers abroad could pay for increasing amounts of our own products.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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